



Latino Legislative Hearing on Pre-K & The Early Grades

NALEO Education Leadership Initiative

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The NALEO Educational Fund is the nation's leading non-profit organization that facilitates full Latino participation in the American political process, from citizenship to public service.

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Convening Partners

The National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators (NHCSL)

The National Hispanic Caucus of School Board Members (NHC–NSBA)

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On September 23, 2008, Latino state legislators from throughout the United States participated in a Legislative Hearing on Pre-K and the Early Grades on Capitol Hill. The nation's leading experts on Latinos and early childhood education presented new research and information on programs and policies that work. Their testimony provided an in-depth understanding for the potential of high-quality pre-k through 3rd grade education to close persistent school readiness and achievement gaps for Latino students.

The Legislative Hearing on Pre-K and the Early Grades was part of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund's 4th Annual National Summit on the State of Latino Education, an intensive three-day convening of 50 Latino public officials, including state legislators, school board members, community college trustees and municipal officials from across the country.

Why focus on early education for Latino children? Our economy depends upon it.

Significant demographic changes ahead may leave large numbers of children, primarily Latino children, insufficiently prepared to get the education they need to contribute to the future workforce. Research, and the experience of several states and districts, show that high-quality early childhood education, often coupled with a dual language approach, can close this achievement gap, saving dollars down the line that would be spent on remedial instruction and better preparing the U.S. workforce to effectively compete in the global economy.



While individual predictions vary, the number of Latino children under age 5 is expected to increase by 125 to 150 percent between 2005 and 2050. Research shows that an enormous proportion of human brain development and foundational learning takes place in the early years and culminating at the important 3rd grade turning point, when young students shift from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.”

Yet this valuable early learning period lacks significant public awareness and investment. And Latino children—because of both language differences and social-economic factors—are often among the most underserved children, not receiving sufficient early childhood education. The result, research shows, is children who enter educational systems behind and never catch up. With concern about a prepared future workforce rising, an investment in early education can carry long-term value.

In opening remarks to the Latino Legislative Hearing on Pre-K and the Early Grades, the Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard, U.S. Representative (D-CA), pointed out that in her work on the U.S. House Education and Labor Subcommittee, she experienced firsthand the problem of preparing our nation’s diverse labor force for the future.

“It’s truly a crisis,” she noted. “Only about 40 percent of Latino children ages 3 to 5 are in pre-k, compared with 60 percent of African-American and white children that age—and later, our high school dropout rate is nearly double that of African-Americans and three times that of whites.”

At this hearing, leading researchers in early childhood education presented evidence that aligning instruction from pre-k to 3rd grade and ensuring specially trained early childhood educators and appropriate curricula can make a significant difference in achievement. Those administering successful programs testified on what is currently working in the educational field, from dual language programs to principal training. Lastly, researchers presented an overview of funding for early childhood education, determining what necessary investment and analyzing possible funding sources.



Executive Summary



Testimony at the Latino Legislative Hearing on Pre-K and the Early Grades was presented in three parts.

Part 1

The Importance of Pre-K to 3rd Grade Education for Latinos

“Early Education Helps Close the Achievement Gap”

Dr. Eugene E. García, Vice President for Education Partnerships at Arizona State University, testified on research showing that early education can close the education achievement gap. For policymakers, he outlined promising approaches for improving academic outcomes in programs beginning as early as infancy.

“Seven Policy Myths of Early Education: Reviewing the Facts”

Dr. Michael López, Executive Director, National Center for Latino Child & Family Research, gave testimony that refuted commonly held myths about Latino children and their parents and presented research-based recommendations for policymakers.

Part 2

Effective Programs: Case Studies of Various State Approaches

“Getting to the 3rd Grade Turning Point”

Ms. Kristie Kauerz, former Early Childhood/Pre-K to 3rd Policy Director for the Office of Colorado Lieutenant Governor Barbara O’Brien, testified based on experience in working with more than 40 states. Her analysis showed that state policymakers can increase success through incentivizing efforts that improve the full pre-k to 3rd grade continuum, such as breaking down the “silo effect” of having child care, pre-k, and elementary schools operate under different state administrations.

“Dual Language Focus Gets Results”

Dr. Ellen Frede, Co-Director, National Institute for Early Education Research, testified about the success of dual language programs in New Jersey in advancing the overall learning for all students, not only English Language Learners.

“Keeping the Momentum Going through Aligning Systems”

The Honorable Jesse H. Ruiz, Chairman, Illinois State Board of Education, testified on the implementation and success of several programs in Illinois, including the institution of an Early Learning Council and the Preschool for All program, the first state-funded preschool program to offer services to all 3- and 4- year-olds.

Part 3

Public Investment: Approaches to Determining and Locating Funding at the State Level

“Early Education Funding: Strategies for Creating Effective Programs”

Dr. Libby Doggett, Executive Director, Pre-K Now, testified on the need to first define what makes a high-quality early education program. She then analyzed how states have used different strategies ranging from excise taxes to general funds to fund effective early education programs.

“Developing a Model for Early Education Funding”

Dr. Lawrence O. Picus, Professor at the University of Southern California Rossier School of Education and director of the Center for Research in Education Finance, described and demonstrated an economic model through which states can determine spending per child for quality early education programs, using several types of variables.

Co-Chairs:

Hon. Rafael Anchía
Texas State Representative
Chair, NALEO Educational Fund

Hon. Bonnie Garcia
California State Assemblymember

State Legislators:

Hon. Andres Ayala, Jr.
Connecticut State Representative

Hon. Antonio Maestas
New Mexico State Representative

Hon. Delia Garcia
Kansas State Representative

Hon. Carlos Mariani-Rosa
Minnesota State Representative

Hon. Ana Sol Gutierrez
Maryland State Delegate

Hon. Pedro Marin
Georgia State Representative

Hon. Phyllis Gutierrez-Kenney
Washington State Representative

Hon. Juan Pichardo
Rhode Island State Senator

Hon. Ana Hernandez
Texas State Representative

Hon. Louis Ruiz
Kansas State Representative

Hon. Elizabeth Hernandez
Illinois State Representative



The Importance of Pre -K to 3rd Grade Education for Latinos

Proof Positive: Early Education Helps Close the Achievement Gap

Dr. Eugene E. García, Vice President for Education Partnerships at Arizona State University, testified on research showing that early education can close the education achievement gap. For policymakers, he outlined promising approaches for improving academic outcomes in programs beginning as early as infancy.

Seven Policy Myths of Early Education: Reviewing the Facts

Dr. Michael López, Executive Director, National Center for Latino Child & Family Research, gave testimony that refuted commonly held myths about Latino children and their parents and presented research-based recommendations for policymakers.

Proof Positive: Early Education Helps Close the Achievement Gap

Testimony from Dr. Eugene E. García

Vice President of Education Partnerships, Arizona State University

About the speaker:

A former Dean at Arizona State University's College of Education, Eugene E. García's current role at ASU is to strengthen K-12 education in Arizona through university-public school initiatives. Dr. García has published in the area of language teaching and bilingual development, served as a Senior Officer in the U.S. Department of Education and has chaired the National Task Force on Early Childhood Education for Hispanics.

More information: www.ecehispanic.org

Summary

Research makes the case that high-quality early childhood education can assist children who begin school with language barriers become higher achievers.

Testimony transcript:

The Latino population is rapidly growing in the United States. Currently, Latino children make up 20% of the nation's young (infant through 8 years old), with about one-fourth of newborns being Latino. In a little over 25 years, this percentage is projected to go up to 25%; that is, one out of every four children in the United States will be Latino. For some states such as New Mexico, current population estimates show a much greater percentage of Latino children:

- For all children under 5 years of age, 54% are of Latino origin.
- For all children ages 5 through 9, 54 % are of Latino origin.

It is important for individuals, families, communities, and society that Latino children's school readiness and school achievement are at their best. However, this is currently not the case. Data show that Latino children lag far behind their white counterparts in kindergarten through 12th grade and subsequently in their college years. This extant situation has far reaching economic and social ramifications, negatively affecting the workforce (and therefore our economic health) and fostering social injustice and a lack of opportunity for those children to participate fully in our society as they move forward in life.

1 The information in this paper highlights selected information contained in the publication, *Para Nuestros Niños: Expanding and Improving Early Education for Hispanics*; any additional information contained herein, not from the *Para Nuestros Niños* report, is otherwise noted. *Para Nuestros Niños* was published March, 2007 by the National Task Force on Early Childhood Education for Hispanics and is available at <http://www.eceLatino.org>. [Editor's note: Dr. Garcia is the current Chair of the aforementioned task force.]

2 University of New Mexico (March, 2007). 2000 to 2006 State and County Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race and Latino Origin from the Census Bureau. Available at <http://www.unm.edu/~bber/demo/coestchar.htm>.

Policymakers can make a difference in closing the achievement gap by improving academic outcomes for Latino children in the early childhood years. There are promising approaches for improving education in the primary grades, in pre-k, and in programs for infants and toddlers that can be translated into policy.

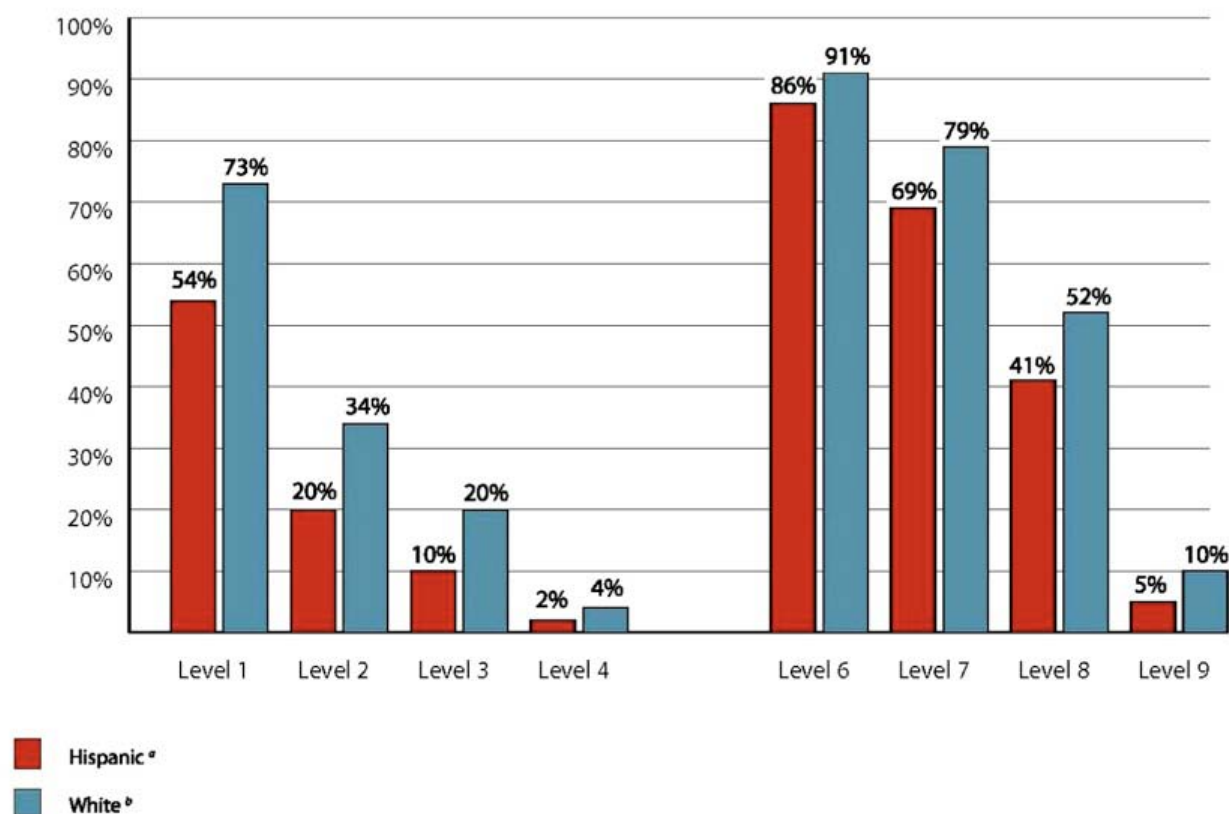
How are Latino children faring in school readiness and school achievement?

Achievement Gaps at the Elementary Level

On average, Latino students' achievement from kindergarten to 5th grade is at a much lower level than that of whites. A recent analysis report, commissioned by the National Task Force on Early Childhood Education for Hispanics, which utilizes data from a large national longitudinal study, showed that:

- Compared to their white counterparts, Latino children lagged behind on measures of reading and math skills at the start of kindergarten.
- A large achievement gap still persisted in reading and math at the end of the 5th grade; the following figure depicts the reading skills differential gap.
- Social-economic status was associated with achievement differences for both Latinos and whites (lower social-economic status was associated with much lower reading and math achievement); 36% of the Latinos were in the lowest social-economic status quintile compared to 8% of whites; 9% of the Latinos were in the highest quintile compared to 30% of the whites.
- Mexican-American children had the lowest reading and math achievement levels among Latino children from the various Latino national origin groups.
- There is definite intergenerational progress: Third-generation Mexican-Americans had higher reading and math achievement than first- and second-generation Mexican-Americans at the start of kindergarten and across the elementary years (third-generation Mexican-Americans had stronger family social-economic profiles than first- and second-generation Mexican-Americans).

Figure 1: Reading Skills at the Start of Kindergarten and at the End of 5th Grade



Level 1: Recognition of letters

Level 2: Understanding beginning sounds of words

Level 3: Understanding ending sounds of words

Level 4: Sight recognition of words

Level 5: Comprehension of words in context*

Level 6: Literal inference from words in text

Level 7: Extrapolating from text to derive meaning

Level 8: Evaluating and interpreting beyond text

Level 9: Evaluating nonfiction

*not pictured

a The Latino data do not include the 30% of the Latino children in the ECLS-K sample that did not have oral English skills strong enough for them to take the English-language reading readiness assessment as they entered kindergarten.

b The white students in the study were limited to those who were third-generation Americans, because they represent the “baseline” group within the white population.

c Levels defined in Princiotta, D., and Flanagan, K. (2006). Findings from the Fifth-Grade Follow-up of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Source: Reardon, S.F., and Galindo, C. (2006). Patterns of Latino Students’ Math and English Literacy Test Scores. Report to the National Task Force on Early Childhood Education for Hispanics. Tempe, AZ: Arizona State University.

Achievement Gaps at the Secondary School Level

Achievement gaps at the secondary level have been shown by other studies as well. One such major study, the Educational Longitudinal Study, has shown Latinos scoring much lower in reading proficiency measures compared to whites, including within same social-economic status quartiles. In 2003, an international study conducted by the Organization for Economic Development (OECD) measuring math literacy, problem solving, reading literacy, and science literacy, found that among 15-year-olds, U.S. Latinos (and African-Americans) scored much lower than Whites and Asian Americans.

Achievement Gaps and English Language Proficiency

In the Reading Skills at the Start of Kindergarten and at the End of 5th Grade figure above regarding the ECLS-K study, it is noted that 30% of the Latino children in the sample did not have oral English skills strong enough for them to participate in the assessment when they started kindergarten. Throughout their elementary years, and at the end of the 5th grade, these children were performing far below white children's averages in reading and math and below the averages for the other 70% of Latino children.

What factors influence school readiness and achievement?

Foundational patterns of school readiness and achievement occur from birth to 3 years of age. Families, therefore, play an important role in providing fertile ground for developing positive outcomes for school readiness and achievement. Parenting practices incorporating language and literacy development opportunities (e.g., talking and reading to children, having literacy-related materials in the home) will positively influence the child's reading skills throughout the timeline of his or her school years. Studies have shown an association between well-educated parents (with college and graduate degrees) and their children having a larger vocabulary and stronger pre-reading skills at the start of kindergarten (which are predictors for later reading achievement outcomes) compared to children with less well-educated parents.

3 Ingels, S.J., Burns, L.J., Chen, X., Cataldi, E.F., and Charleston, S. (2005). Initial Results from the Base Year of the Education Longitudinal Study of 2002. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

When there is a gap on measures of reading readiness, math concepts, and general knowledge at the start of kindergarten, this pattern is entrenched by the end of 3rd grade. The consequence of the situation of these early years reverberates throughout subsequent elementary and secondary school years, negatively impacting academic progress. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to optimize development opportunities related to school readiness and achievement during the pre-k through 3rd grade in order to solidify a strong early childhood foundation for academic progress; these early years are critical.

What are some educational strategies to address the achievement gaps?

In light of the influential factors discussed above for school readiness and achievement, the following early education strategies can be employed to address achievement gaps.

- Expand access to infant/toddler programs designed for school readiness (e.g., Early Head Start) that serve, or have the potential to serve, Latino families. Such programs can expand language and literacy development opportunities. Provide information to Latino parents about available programs.
- Expand pre-k access for Latino children, to increase their enrollment (historically, within the total population of the respective ethnicities, a lower percentage of Latino children compared to white children attend pre-k programs).
- Increase the number of bilingual (Spanish and English) teachers and second-language acquisition specialists, which can attenuate or eliminate the language barrier—which is also a learning barrier—for children who are not proficient in English when they start school.
Also, provide the economic incentives to recruit and maintain well-educated, pre-k professionals.
- At the kindergarten through 3rd grade level, incorporate a strong literacy development focus and provide some form of English-plus-Spanish instruction.
- Establish or enhance monitoring of the readiness and achievement progress of subpopulations by establishing an information system for pre-k and kindergarten (and optimally through 3rd grade).
The system would disaggregate students into subpopulations defined in terms of: race/ethnicity; parent education level; family income; first-, second-, or third-generation status; and primary language spoken in the home.

How can the above strategies be translated into policy (and implementation)?

- Create incentives for the development of relevant professionals in institutions of higher education.
- Connect the pre-k sector with the kindergarten through 3rd grade education sector, enhancing joint training opportunities.
- Begin movement towards a universal pre-k opportunity for all children.



Seven Policy Myths of Early Education: Reviewing the Facts

Testimony from Dr. Michael López

Executive Director, National Center for Latino Child & Family Research

About the speaker:

Michael López serves on a number of education initiatives including: research consultant for the \$600 million “First 5 LA” universal preschool initiative; member of the Research Working Group of the White House Initiative on the Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans; and consultant to the National Task Force on Early Childhood Education for Hispanics. Prior to launching the Center, Dr. López directed a number of large-scale, national, research projects, including the National Head Start Impact Study, the first-ever randomized study examining the impact of Head Start on children’s school readiness.

More information: www.latinochildresearch.org

Summary

A growing body of research is helping to dispel myths about early childhood education for Latino children and English Language Learners, giving policymakers the material they need to make changes.

Testimony transcript:

The recent increases in the number and size of state and local early education programs has been accompanied by an increased focus on the culturally and linguistically diverse population of children served by such programs. Latinos are the fastest-growing ethnic minority group in the United States, especially among families living in poverty and children under 5 years of age. The number of Latino children under 5 is expected to increase 146% between 2005 and 2050⁴. Currently, Latino children already represent 21.4% of the early childhood population—an amount larger than all minority groups of that age combined⁵.

Linguistic diversity is one of the hallmarks of the changing face of this country's population. Children whose home language is not English or who primarily speak a language other than English in the home are considered English Language Learners. Nationally, approximately 20% of the school-age population speaks a language other than English at home; between 14% and 16% of all children speak Spanish as their home language⁶, and another 4% to 6% speak a language other than Spanish. Looking just within the younger kindergarten through 5th grade population of English Language Learners, the majority, 76%, speak Spanish and are considered Latino⁷.

4 Day, J.C. (1996). *Population projections of the United States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1995 to 2050*. Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, P25-1130, U.S. Government Printing Office.

5 U.S. Census Bureau (2004). Table 4: Annual estimates of the population by sex and age for the United States: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2003. (NC-EST2003-04-3, 5, 7, 12 & 13).

6 Reyes, I. and Moll, L. (2004). *Latinos and bilingualism*. In Encyclopedia Latina, Grolier Publishers.

7 Capps, R., Fixx, M., Ost, J., Reardon-Anderson, J., & Passel, J. (2004). *The Health and Well-Being of Young Children of Immigrants*. Urban Institute: New York, NY.

Within certain states and localities, these changes are even more pronounced. For example, California has become increasingly diverse in the past several decades. At present, Latino children are the largest group of 3- to 5-year-olds (46%), followed by white children (34%), then Asian and Pacific Islander children (9%), then African-American children (6%)⁸.

When looking at the related linguistic diversity associated with these demographic changes, in California, it is estimated that over 44% of 5-year-olds entering kindergarten in the public schools in 2004-2005 were children whose primary home language was not English, with most of these children (82%) being Spanish-speaking⁹.

These population estimates reflect the dramatic increases in the percentage of culturally and linguistically diverse young children entering the public school system, both nationally and even more so within certain states and localities.

School readiness and related academic achievement among the rapidly growing population of English Language Learner children, and particularly Latino English Language Learner children from low-income homes, is a major concern for educational policymakers at the state and federal levels^{10 11}.

Throughout the United States, the academic achievement levels, high school completion rates, and college attendance rates of Latino English Language Learner children remain markedly below that of their white, English-speaking peers¹². This gap often is seen as early as the preschool years and tends to increase over time. Given this documented achievement gap, there is growing concern among parents, schools, and policymakers that much more needs to be done to support the growing population of Latino children and their families in order to ensure the success of the educational system's efforts to improve children's school readiness, academic achievement and ultimate success in life.

8 Lopez, E.S., & de Cos, P.L. (2004). Preschool and childcare enrollment in California. California Research Bureau No: CRB99009. Sacramento, California.

9 California Department of Education Data Quest, 2005.

10 California Research Office, 2005

11 Pew Hispanic Research Center (2005). Statistical Portraits of the Hispanic and Foreign-Born Populations at Mid-Decade. Pew Hispanic Center, Author.

12 National Center for Education Statistics (2003). *Status and trends in the education of Hispanics*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Education, NCES.

However, despite these growing concerns, there are a number of common misperceptions or myths about Latino children and their families that often serve as real obstacles to adequately addressing these needs. The purpose of this paper is to highlight some of the research that refutes several of these commonly held myths about Latino children and their parents, as well as present some research-based implications or recommendations for consideration by policymakers.

Myth 1: Learning two languages during early childhood will overwhelm, confuse, and/or delay a child's acquisition of English.

As children acquire a second language, one language may be more dominant because they are using that language more than the other at a particular point in time. Frequently children demonstrate a language imbalance as they progress toward bilingualism. During this time, children may not perform as well as native speakers in either language, which is a normal and most often temporary phase of emergent bilingualism¹³.

Becoming proficient in a language is a complex and demanding process that takes many years for children of all ages. As with any type of learning, children will vary enormously in the rate at which they learn a first and a second language. It is important to think of bilingualism as a continuum that can vary tremendously from child to child. The speed of language acquisition for any given child is due to factors both within the child and in the child's learning environment. A child's temperament, innate ability for languages, interest and motivation will interact with the quantity and quality of language inputs and opportunities for use, both at home and in other care settings, to influence the rate of language acquisition and eventual fluency levels. However, there is growing evidence that when infants are provided adequate exposure to two languages, they are capable of developing distinct but parallel language abilities¹⁴.

13 Genesee, F., Raradis, J., & Crago, M. (2004). *Dual language development & Disorders: A handbook on bilingualism and second language learning*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

14 Petito, L.A., Katerelos, M., Levy, B.G., Guana, K., Tetreault, K., & Ferraro, V. (2001). Bilingual signed and spoken language acquisition from birth. *Journal of Child Language*, 28, 453-496.

Myth 2: Total English immersion from pre-k through 3rd grade is the best way for English Language Learners to acquire English.

It is not uncommon to hear the argument that since English Language Learner children will eventually need to become proficient in English in order to be successful in the public school system, the best approach is to immerse them in English-only programs starting as early as preschool and extending into elementary school. However, the growing research evidence suggests that English Language Learners may actually do better academically if there is some continued support for their home language, primarily due to cross-language transfer, or the transfer of skills between first and second languages^{15 16 17}. In other words, children are able to build upon the foundation of their home language skills in ways that facilitate their learning of English language and literacy skills.

A number of studies have documented the important influence that home language skills and abilities can have on the overall development of their development of English proficiency^{18 19 20}. Similarly, other studies and several exhaustive reviews of the research literature have found that specifically teaching ELL children reading skills in their first language may be more effective in terms of later English reading achievement than immersing children in English-only programs^{21 22 23 24 25}. Thus, there is clear support for providing some continued language and literacy instruction in Spanish as a way to build upon their foundation of home language skills and thereby facilitate their acquisition of literacy skills in English.

15 Snow, C., Burns, M.S., and Griffin, P. (Eds.) (1998). Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

16 Dickinson, D., McCabe, A., Clark-Chiarelli, N., & Wolf, A. (2004, July). Cross-language transfer of phonological awareness in low-income Spanish and English bilingual preschool children. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 25(3), 323-347.

17 Tabors, P., Pérez, M., & López, L. (2003). Dual language abilities of bilingual four-year olds: Initial findings from the Early Childhood Study of Language and Literacy Development of Spanish-speaking Children. *NABE Journal of Research and Practice*, Winter, 70-91. <http://www.uc.edu/njrp>

18 Dickinson, McCabe, Clark-Chiarelli, & WOLF (2004).

19 Hammer, C., Lawrence, F., & Miccio, A. (2007, July). Bilingual Children's Language Abilities and Early Reading Outcomes in Head Start and Kindergarten. *Language, Speech, & Hearing Services in Schools*, 38(3), 237-248.

20 Tabors, Pérez, & López, (2003).

21 August, D., Calderón, M., & Carlo, M. (2002). *Transfer of skills from Spanish to English: A study of young learners*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

22 August, D., & Shanahan, T. (Eds.) (2006). *Developing literacy in second language Learners: Report of the national literacy panel on language minority youth and Children*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

23 Goldenberg, C., Rueda, R., & August, D. (2006). Synthesis: Sociocultural contexts and literacy development. In D. August & T. Shanahan (Eds.), *Report of the national literacy panel on language minority youth and children*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

24 Slavin, R.E. & Cheung, A. (2005). A synthesis of research on language of reading instruction for English language learners. *Review of Educational Research*, 75(2), 247-284.

25 Matera, C. & Gerber, M.M. (2008). Effects of a Literacy Curriculum That Supports Writing Development of Spanish-Speaking English Learners in Head Start, *NHSA Dialog*, 11(1), 25-43.

Myth 3: Spanish-speaking Latinos show more social, emotional and behavioral problems.

Many English Language Learner Latino children grow up in households characterized by a number of potential risk factors such as poverty, large household size, recent immigrant status, low parental education attainment, and low English language fluency, as compared to non-Latino children^{26 27 28 29}. In addition to documented academic achievement levels that are markedly below that of their white, English-speaking peers³⁰, there often are concerns that English Language Learner Latino children also may be more likely to exhibit a range of social, emotional, and behavioral problems as they transition into the public school system.

In spite of the very real concerns that English Language Learner Latino children may in fact be at greater risk for the development of social, emotional, and/or behavioral problems as they make the transition into schools, there are several studies that have documented some important factors that may help offset this increased risk for such outcomes.

In one study, teachers rated children of Mexican immigrant families at kindergarten entry as having lower levels of emotional and behavioral problems, and also reported that they were more socially and emotionally competent than other children from similar backgrounds³¹. These findings are not too surprising, given that Latino parents place such a strong emphasis on culturally based child-rearing goals such as *familismo* (familism), *respeto* (respect), and *educación* (moral education) in raising their children³².

26 Matera, C. & Gerber, M.M. (2008). Effects of a Literacy Curriculum That Supports Writing Development of Spanish-Speaking English Learners in Head Start, *NHSA Dialog*, 11(1), 25-43.

27 Hidalgo, N.M. (1998). Toward a definition of a Latino family research paradigm. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(1), 103-120.

28 Hurtado, A. (1995). Variations, combinations, and evolutions: Latino families in the United States. *Understanding Latino families: Scholarship, policy, and practice*, 40-61.

29 Ramirez, R., & de la Cruz, P. (2002). *The Hispanic Population in the United States: March, 2002*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.

30 National Center for Education Statistics (2003). *Status and trends in the education of Hispanics*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Education, NCES.

31 Espinosa, L. English-language learners as they enter school. In R. Pianta, M. Cox, & K. Snow (Eds.), *School readiness and the transition to kindergarten in the era of accountability* (pp.175-196). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes, 2007.

32 Halgunseth, L.C., Ispa, J.M., Duane, R. (2006). "Parental Control in Latino Families: An Integrated Review of the Literature." *Child Development*, 77(5), 1282-1287.

In another large study that examined the social and language development of Spanish-speaking children in preschool programs across 11 different states, teacher's use of Spanish in the classroom was associated with more positive social skills and teacher-child relationships³³. Similarly, teacher's ratings of the Spanish-speaking children's social skills with peers and their assertiveness also were positively related to teacher's increased use of Spanish in the classroom. These findings suggest the important influence that the cultural and linguistic "match" between children and their teachers, as well as the language of instruction may have on not only children's academic outcomes, but their socio-emotional outcomes as well.

Myth 4: The academic progress of English Language Learners should only be assessed in English, since they will need to become proficient in English in order to do well academically.

In recent years, there has been an increased emphasis placed at the federal, state, and local levels on the development of more substantial assessment and accountability systems to help ensure the success of educational programs' efforts to improve children's school readiness. One of the many challenges encountered in the development of such systems has been the question of how to best include the growing population of English language learners within these accountability efforts. Although there is a growing understanding of the nature and complexities of English Language Learner children's language development in relation to their school readiness, this understanding doesn't always result in research-based decision making.

Different approaches have been utilized to try to compensate for the inherent complexities of the issues related to the language and literacy development of English Language Learner children, as well as to overcome some of the limitations of the currently available assessment tools³⁴. The different strategies have ranged from total exclusion of non-English-speaking English Language Learner children, to much more sophisticated efforts that attempt to take into account the fuller array of developmental skills and abilities across languages.

33 Chang, F., Crawford, G., Early, D., Bryant, D., Howes, C., Burchinal, M., Barbarin, O. Clifford, R. and Pianta, R. (2007). Spanish-Speaking Children's Social and Language Development in Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms, *Early Education & Development*, (18)2, 243-269.

34 Espinosa, L. & López, M.L. (2007). Assessment Considerations for Young English Language Learners Across Different Levels of Accountability. Commissioned paper for First 5 LA and the Pew Charitable Trusts' Early Childhood Accountability Project.

Given the increasing emphasis on English language instruction within public school systems, it is not uncommon to see the implementation of an accountability assessment approach that essentially ignores issues of linguistic diversity by assessing all children in English. This type of an approach often is justified by school personnel or researchers on the well-intended assumption that over time, children's academic progress will be dependent upon the acquisition of English language abilities.

For example, under the No Child Left Behind Act, all non-native English speakers initially were required to be assessed for their level of English fluency annually. However, the main limitation of this type of an English Language Learner assessment approach is that it ignores children's existing skills and abilities in their home language, as well as their prior experiences and learning that have occurred, and which directly relate to their future learning development³⁵. As noted above, there is considerable variability in the rate and sequence of language development for young English Language Learner children; therefore to accurately understand how well children are progressing in their overall development, more appropriate assessment strategies are required.



35 Abedi, J. (2004). The No Child Left Behind Act and English language learners: Assessment and accountability issues. *Educational Researcher*. Vol. 33, No 1, 4-14.

Myth 5: Latino English language learners are less likely to be enrolled in pre-k programs, because of their families' cultural values.

Prior research has demonstrated that high-quality early child care and education experiences are associated with multiple positive impacts in young children³⁶. Therefore, high-quality early child care and education are increasingly viewed as critical factors contributing to positive development and specifically school readiness³⁷. In addition to existing research supporting the positive outcomes associated with early child care and education programs, the growing numbers of mothers with young children entering the workforce has led to an increased public awareness about the need for and importance of quality early child care and education programs³⁸.

However, much of the existing research has found that Latino children are the least likely of all racial/ethnic subgroups to participate in early childhood education, especially center-based programs, prior to kindergarten^{39 40 41}. Some researchers have described a cultural preference of Latina mothers for relative care versus center-based care as a potential explanation for the observed differences in utilization rates^{42 43}. However, a recent study⁴⁴ found stronger evidence that socioeconomic/structural barriers and related resources may be more critical determinants of Latino early-education enrollment patterns than are cultural factors.

36 Loeb, S., Fuller, B., Kagan, S.L., & Carrol, B. (2004). Child Care in Poor Communities: Early Learning Effects of Type, Quality, and Stability. *Child Development*, 75(1), 47-65.

37 Bridges, M., Fuller, B., Rumberger, R., & Tran, L. (2004). Preschool for California's Children: Promising Benefits, Unequal Access. Policy Brief, 04-03.

38 Capizzano, J., Adams, G., & Sonenstein, F. (2000). Child Care Arrangements for Children under Five: Urban Institute.

39 Becerra, R.M. (2002). Investing in California's Latino children under 5. [Electronic Version]. Latino Policy & Issues Brief.

40 Buysse, V., Castro, D.C., West, T., & Skinner, M. (2005). Addressing the Needs of Latino Children: A National Survey of State Administrators of Early Childhood Programs. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 20(2), 146-16318.

41 Chyu, Laura, Anne R. Pebley, and Sandraluz Lara-Cinisomo, Patterns of Child Care Use for Preschoolers in Los Angeles County, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, TR-116-FFLA, 2005. As of May 23, 2008: http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR116/

42 Buriel, R., & Hurtado-Ortiz, M.T. (2000). Child Care Practices and Preferences of Native-and Foreign-Born Latina Mothers and Euro-American Mothers. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 22(3), 314-331.

43 Fuller, B., Holloway, S.D., & Liang, X. (1996). Family Selection of Child Care Centers: The Influence of Household Support, Ethnicity, and Parental Practices. *Child Development*, 67(6), 3320-3337.

44 Hernandez, D.J. (2006). Young Hispanic children in the U.S.: A demographic portrait based on Census 2000. New York: SUNY.

Similarly, other evidence suggests that Latino child care utilization patterns also may be partially related to community access and availability limitations, reflecting a shortage of center-based and culturally competent childcare in Latino neighborhoods⁴⁵. A recent survey of 1,000 Latino households across 10 states found that most Latino parents (96%) believe that it is important for children to attend preschool prior to kindergarten, despite the reported obstacles to accessing preschool options, such as the lack of information about program options and affordability⁴⁶. Based upon the available evidence that Latino parents' cultural beliefs and preferences may not be the primary contributing factor to the underutilization of early childhood education programs, additional efforts can and should work to improve the access and availability of such programs for Latino children.

Myth 6: Latino parents believe that children's learning in the areas of language and literacy should occur primarily at school.

There is an extensive body of research documenting the important influence of children's early home language and learning experiences on school readiness outcomes, including such factors as the amount and quality of exposure to a range of language activities, the availability of language and literacy resources within the home, and the frequency of parents' facilitation of language and pre-literacy skills through early, shared book reading and storytelling^{47 48 49 50}.

45 Howes, C. (2003). First 5 LA and Center for Improving Child Care Quality Research Partnership. Report prepared for First 5 LA.

46 Valencia, Perez & Echeveste, (2006). Latino public opinion survey of pre-kindergarten programs: Knowledge, preferences and public support, April 2006. Los Angeles, CA: Tomas Rivera Policy Institute.

47 Dickinson, D.K., & Tabors, P.O. (2001). Beginning Literacy with Language: Young Children Learning at Home and School.

48 Hart, B., & Risley, T.R. (1995). Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children.

49 Raikes, H., Alexander Pan, B., Luze, G., Tamis-LeMonda, C.S., Brooks-Gunn, J., Constantine, J., et al. (2006). Mother-Child Bookreading in Low-Income Families: Correlates and Outcomes During the First Three Years of Life. *Child Development*, 77(4), 924-953.

50 Whitehurst, G.J., & Lonigan, C.J. (2001). Emergent literacy: Development from prereaders to readers. *Handbook of early literacy research*, 11-29.

Despite the documented importance of home language and learning experiences, various studies have found that Latino parents report reading less frequently to their children at home and often have substantially fewer books or other literacy materials available in their homes, both of which factors have been shown to be related to lower performance on cognitive, language, and literacy tasks^{51 52 53 54}.

Other researchers have identified a number of culturally relevant factors that may contribute to these lower rates of home language and learning experiences in Latino families, such as parents' language proficiency and literacy levels, parents' values and beliefs about their children's education, and the relative proportion of home language experiences in English versus those in Spanish^{55 56 57 58}. Although Spanish-speaking Latino parents value education and are eager to support their children's language and literacy development, they frequently receive confusing or unclear messages from family members, professionals, and the media regarding the importance of their children learning English and whether their continued use of Spanish in the home is detrimental^{59 60}. Thus, educators can help Latino parents understand that any speaking and/or reading with their children, regardless of whether it is in English or their home language, will help improve their children's overall development, including their English learning.

Similarly, many Latino parents, especially more recent immigrants, may perceive their parenting role as one that primarily supports the nurturance, health, and protection of their children, and one that facilitates learning activities rather than directly engages in them⁶¹. As such, Latino parents may not understand the important value that their home learning experiences may have in strengthening their children's language and literacy development in ways that will contribute to their school readiness.

51 Brooks-Gunn, J., & Markman, L.B. (2005). The contribution of parenting to ethnic and racial gaps in school readiness. *Future Child*, 15(1), 139-168.

52 Flores, G., Tomany-Korman, S.C., & Olson, L. (2005). Does disadvantage start at home? Racial and ethnic disparities in health-related early childhood home routines and safety practices. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med*, 159(2), 158-165.

53 Pachter, L.M., Auinger, P., Palmer, R., & Weitzman, M. (2006). Do parenting and the home environment, maternal depression, neighborhood, and chronic poverty affect child behavioral problems differently in different racial-ethnic groups? *Pediatrics*, 117(4), 1329-1338.

54 Raikes, Alexander Pan, Luze, Tamis-LeMonda, Brooks-Gunn, Constantine, (2006).

55 Drummond, K. V., & Stipek, D. (2004). Low-Income Parents' Beliefs about Their Role in Children's Academic Learning. *The Elementary School Journal*, 104(3), 197-213.

56 Fuller, Holloway, & Liang, (1996).

57 Garcia Coll, C., Akiba, D., Palacios, N., Bailey, B., Silver, R., DiMartino, L., et al. (2002). Parental Involvement in Children's Education: Lessons from Three Immigrant Groups. *Parenting: Science and Practice*, 2, 303-324.

58 Tabors, P.O., Roach, K.A., & Snow, C.E. (2001). Home language and literacy environment: Final results. *Beginning literacy with language: Young children learning at home and school*, 111-138.

59 Lee, S.L. (1999). The linguistic minority parent's perceptions of bilingual education. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 23(2&3).

60 Valencia, Perez & Echeveste, (2006).

61 Halgunseth, Ispa, Duane, (2006).

Myth 7: Latino parents are not interested or motivated to get involved in their children's education.

Researchers have documented the important role of parents' involvement in their children's education, both at home and at school^{62 63}. However, it is not uncommon to find rather substantial differences between the perception of teachers and parents, especially Latino parents, about what constitutes parental involvement. Various studies have found that school personnel often perceive that Latino parents do not care and are not motivated to get involved in their children's education, typically due to the low levels of actual parental involvement in school-related activities^{64 65}.

In contrast, Latino parents often report numerous obstacles to their involvement, including linguistic barriers, lack of communication from the school, and an unwelcoming school environment. Furthermore, in the Latino culture there is an emphasis on respect, so it may not be viewed as respectful to do anything that might question the teacher's role as the educator. As such, Latino parents often view parent involvement as their provision of more informal support to their children at home.

In one recent study, researchers collected information on parental involvement, separately from teachers and Latino parents, which documented the dramatically different perspectives found in previous studies⁶⁶. The researchers then shared the information with school personnel and parents, which not only helped to dispel many of their respective preconceived ideas about each other, but also helped facilitate more open communication.

62 Epstein, J.L., & Sanders, M.G. (2002). Family, school, and community partnerships. In M.H. Bornstein (Ed.), *Handbook of parenting. Vol. 5: Practical issues in parenting* (pp. 407—437). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

63 Fan, X., & Chen, M. (2001). Parental involvement and students' academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 13(1), 1-22.

64 De Gaetano, Y. (2007). The role of culture in engaging Latino parents' involvement in school. *Urban Education*, 42, 145- 162.

65 Wong, S.W. & Hughes, J.N., (2006). Ethnicity and Language Contributions to Dimensions of Parent Involvement, *School Psychology Review*, 35 (4), 645-662

66 Quirocho, A.M.L., & Daoud, A.M. (2006). Dispelling myths about Latino parent participation in schools. *The Educational Forum*, 70(3), 255-267.

Implications & Recommendations

Based upon current research on Latino children and families, as summarized above, the following implications and recommendations are suggested for parents, practitioners and policymakers:

- Despite the complexities of bilingual language development, English Language Learner children are capable of learning a second language, if provided with the appropriate opportunities. As such, parents, care providers, and educators should work together in close partnership to provide children with exposure to a range of language and literacy-rich experiences that will support the development of both their home language and English.
- Educators should try to build upon English Language Learner students' foundation of home language skills in order to facilitate their learning of English language and literacy skills, while at the same time supporting the continued development of their home language.
- Although English Language Learner Latino children are more likely than their non-Latino peers to face a range of potential risk factors when growing up, teachers should work to identify and support culturally-based strengths that may help offset their increased risk for social, emotional, and behavioral problems.
- Federal, state, and local accountability systems must continue to work toward the creation of psychometrically sound assessments to be used to assess the school readiness and academic achievement of English Language Learner Latino children.
- At the same time, such federal, state, and local accountability systems also need to utilize the most current and sophisticated methods to take into account the full array of English Language Learner children's developmental skills and abilities, within each language, as well as across languages.
- Efforts to improve the availability, accessibility and affordability of preschool programs in Latino communities, engage in more strategic outreach and awareness campaigns, as well as eliminate potential linguistic and cultural barriers, are needed to help increase the utilization of preschool programs and support the school readiness of Latino children.
- Latino parents should be encouraged to speak and engage in literacy activities in their native language at home so that children may develop a strong foundation in their first language, which is critical to building language and pre-literacy skills that can be transferred to English.

- Providers should explore ways to provide parents books and other resource materials to use in the home in order to support family literacy activities.
- Teachers and school personnel should develop a range of options and strategies for actively engaging Latino parents in the education of their children and avoiding some of the frequent misperceptions about Latino families. These strategies need to take into account some of the commonly reported obstacles to parental involvement, including linguistic barriers, lack of communication from the school, and an unwelcoming school environment

NOTE: The information presented in this testimony highlights information primarily drawn from three previously published sources, unless otherwise noted: (1) Espinosa, L. (2008). Challenging Common Myths about Young English Language Learners. Foundation for Child Development Policy Brief; Advancing PK-3; (2) López, M.L., Barrueco, S., & Miles, J. (2006). Latino infants and their families: A national perspective of protective and risk developmental factors. Report submitted to National Task Force on Early Childhood Education for Hispanics and the Foundation for Child Development; and (3) Espinosa, L. & López, M.L. (2007). Assessment Considerations for Young English Language Learners Across Different Levels of Accountability. Commissioned paper for First 5 LA and the Pew Charitable Trusts' Early Childhood Accountability Project. Address correspondence to Michael L. López, Ph.D.; National Center for Latino Child & Family Research, 22610 Woodfield Road, Laytonsville, MD 20882; email: milopez@earthlink.net.

Effective Programs: Case Studies of Various State Approaches

Getting to the 3rd Grade Turning Point

Ms. Kristie Kauerz, former Early Childhood/Pre-K to 3rd Policy Director for the Office of Colorado Lieutenant Governor Barbara O'Brien, testified based on experience in working with more than 40 states. Her analysis showed that state policymakers can increase success through incentivizing efforts that improve the full pre-k to 3rd grade continuum, such as breaking down the "silo effect" of having child care, pre-k, and elementary schools operate under different state administrations.

Dual Language Focus Gets Results

Dr. Ellen Frede, Co-Director, National Institute for Early Education Research, testified about the success of dual language programs in New Jersey in advancing the overall learning for all students, not only English Language Learners.

Keeping the Momentum Going through Aligning Systems

The Honorable Jesse H. Ruiz, Chairman, Illinois State Board of Education, testified on the implementation and success of several programs in Illinois, including the institution of an Early Learning Council and the Preschool for All program, the first state-funded preschool program to offer services to all 3 and 4-year-olds.

Getting to the 3rd Grade Turning Point

Testimony from Ms. Kristie Kauerz

Former Early Childhood/Pre-K to 3rd Policy Director,
Office of Colorado Lieutenant Governor Barbara O'Brien

About the speaker:

A doctoral candidate in early childhood policy at Columbia University, Kristie Kauerz is currently researching state-level policy reform that addresses the entire pre-k to third grade continuum. In addition to serving Lieutenant Governor O'Brien, she worked previously as director of early learning at the Education Commission of the States and director of public policy analysis at the Center for Human Investment Policy at the University of Colorado-Denver.

Summary

The keys to success include aligning programs to give seamless advancement; full-day kindergarten; and special standards for early learning.

Testimony transcript:

Good morning, Honorable Co-Chairs and distinguished members of the Committee. My name is Kristie Kauerz, and I am honored to be here today to share with you my perspectives on promising practices for improving education for our youngest children.

My testimony draws from my experience working with more than 40 states on these issues and from my dissertation research that focuses on state-level policy reforms that address the first eight years of children's learning and development. The particular focus of my remarks is the creation of a pre-k to 3rd continuum of learning [one that extends and aligns resources and curricula from pre-kindergarten through grade three].

Despite the many education reform efforts over the past decades, children in the United States still do not have universally adequate, much less high quality, education opportunities. Even though educational science has matured and expanded substantially, embedding scientific evidence into education policies and practices is still limited to pilot efforts or to small slivers of the population or of the learning process. Similarly, despite exacting higher standards for learning, student achievement has not increased, and troubling achievement gaps persist. The education enterprise has changed dramatically, with new players—in both the private and public sectors—becoming interested and invested in education. Working collaboratively across these many partners, however, is difficult and, often, contentious. As global interconnectedness increases at a mind-boggling rate, the education system in the United States is lagging behind in preparing a citizenry and a workforce that can participate and succeed.

To address these multiple and persistent challenges, foundations, think tanks, policymakers, business leaders, teachers, and others have proposed a new vision for American education: creating a seamless preschool to graduate studies (P-20) system that aligns education from preschool all the way through



post-secondary education. Within the broad P-20 vision, the transition from high school to college has commanded the bulk of attention as policymakers and business leaders worry about a productive and competent workforce. Significantly less attention has been paid to the earliest years of the P-20 continuum. A focus on pre-k to 3rd grade attempts to change this.

Pre-k to 3rd begins with the years before children enter school (preschool) and extends through grade three, transcending the traditional boundaries of early care and education (ECE) and elementary school. Here, the word “pre-school” is used not to describe a specific program, but as an adjective that describes the services and programs that children experience before their entry into the formal K-12 school system, including, but not limited to, early intervention services, child care, family child care, pre-kindergarten, Early Head Start, and Head Start programs. Pre-k to 3rd also includes the important primary school years, kindergarten through grade three.

In contrast to the abundance of current education reforms that focus exclusively on the years prior to children entering school, pre-k to 3rd extends its focus through grade three. Performance in 3rd grade is seen as a turning point in the educational achievement of many children. This is the year when children shift from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” Unfortunately, the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) issued troubling findings about the educational performance of American children at the end of grade three. About 40% of white and Asian 4th graders scored at or above proficiency on reading; less than 20% of black and Latino children scored at or above proficiency in reading.

A focus on the pre-k to grade three years has several advantages. First, it capitalizes on the unique period of children’s development that forms the foundation for lifelong learning, educational excellence, and eventual competitiveness in the global marketplace. Notable learning theorists and brain-development experts recognize the critical shifts in learning processes and abilities that occur during the first eight years of life.

Second, research has shown that the effects of high-quality pre-k and full-day kindergarten seem to “fade out” over time. As children move through the primary grades, the progress they made in those early learning programs dissipates. While there are many plausible reasons for this, the fade-out effect suggests

that participation in only one or two years of pre-school programs may not be sufficient to inoculate children against future academic failure. In Colorado, we like to say that this is evidence that we need a “silver buckshot” approach to education reform, not a “silver bullet” approach.

Third, pre-k to 3rd anchors the rest of the P-20 continuum. Without a solid foundation, middle school, high school, and college reformers will forever be playing catch-up. Fourth, and finally, pre-k to 3rd addresses the startling gap that exists between learning opportunity and public investment in this country. The first eight years of children’s lives is when their brains develop most rapidly, creating the patterns and expectations for future learning and development. Not only are children learning how to walk and talk; they are also learning how to interact with their peers and adults; they are learning whether curiosity and enthusiasm will be rewarded or discouraged; they are learning how to regulate their own emotions and be sympathetic to the emotions of others; they are learning the value of reading and math, not just in academic settings but in the world around them. In contrast to the trajectory of learning going on during these years, this is the period during which public investment is at its lowest.

Because these same arguments for pre-k to 3rd are often used to bolster other reform efforts, I would like to draw some brief distinctions. I do not view pre-k to 3rd to be synonymous with the current trends to expand state-funded pre-k programs. Though important, a singular focus on these programs will likely never influence all children. In Colorado, for example, there are approximately 68,000 4-year-olds. Nearly 90% (60,000) of them will end up taking Colorado’s 3rd grade achievement tests required under No Child Left Behind. At present, Colorado’s state-funded pre-k program has capacity to serve approximately 20,000 children. This is only one-third of the children who will enter the K-12 system.

Even “universal” pre-k programs do not reach all children. In Georgia, for example, only 65% of the state’s 4-year-olds are enrolled in either the state’s pre-k program or in Head Start. In addition, a singular focus on pre-k does not address the previously mentioned fade-out effect.

Similarly, I do not view pre-k to 3rd to be synonymous with early care and education system-building (ECE) that takes a more expansive view and includes not just pre-k, but also child care, family child care, and services for infants and toddlers. ECE is the foundational, “P” part of pre-k to 3rd, but they are not one and the same. Pre-k to 3rd is also not synonymous with kindergarten to grade three (K-3). Involvement in only early care and education or only K-3 leads to a P-20 system that creates links and/or transitions between three disparate systems: ECE, K-12, and higher education.

I believe the true promise of P-20 is deeper than this and requires re-thinking the three systems altogether, finding innovative reforms that focus on alignment, continuity, and system transformation. The “P” part is just as important as the K-3 part. Indeed, focusing on the full continuum benefits all children.

Starting the continuum at birth is supported by a substantial body of literature that shows that nearly 90% of human brain development occurs during the first three years of life. For infants and toddlers, this development happens within the context of relationships, with families providing the most important and the most consistent interactions. Pre-k to 3rd policy plays an important role in ensuring that parents have the information they need to be supportive of children’s development and in ensuring that whatever out-of-home child care arrangements families choose are of high quality.

Pre-k to 3rd also benefits preschool-age children. Research shows that achievement gaps between children exist as early as kindergarten entry, if not before. Research also shows that many preschool programs (including high-quality child care, state-funded pre-k, and Head Start) for 3- and 4-year-olds are effective investments for closing achievement gaps in the short term, helping children perform better in both math and reading during their kindergarten year, and in producing long-term benefits to society. Similarly, research shows that full-day kindergarten is an important factor in closing achievement gaps and boosting children’s academic success. Unlike the other grades in the K-12 system, many states do not guarantee adequate funds to school districts to provide full-day kindergarten. Pre-k to 3rd policy plays an important role in expanding children’s access to, and ensuring the quality of, these crucial early learning programs.

To maintain the gains children make in high-quality preschool and/or full-day kindergarten, it is important to consider the quality of grades one, two, and three. Research shows that children's classroom experiences in elementary school are of highly variable quality and, in direct contradiction to the holistic learning needs of young children, lack both the instructional and emotional climates that have been shown to be related to positive child outcomes. This is particularly problematic for low-income and English Language Learner students because placement into elementary school is primarily dependent on residential location, with these children more likely to end up in low-resource—and therefore low quality—schools.

Because it straddles both the early childhood and the K-12 worlds, pre-k to 3rd takes both education reform—and child development—seriously. Pre-k to 3rd recognizes the importance of standards-based and accountability-based efforts, but also recognizes that young children learn and should be assessed in ways quite different from older children. In this sense, pre-k to 3rd is not a “push-down” of academic expectations or high-stakes accountability measures. Rather, it is both a “push-down” and a “push-up” reform effort. Each part of the pre-k to 3rd grade continuum—early childhood, kindergarten, and grades one through three—need to change and adapt to the best practices of the others.

Let me provide examples that will help illustrate: early care and education will need to adapt a stronger dedication to systems of accountability that include a focus on children's progress, abilities, and skills, as well as teachers' preparation and effectiveness. Early childhood will also need to adapt a more vigorous dedication to universal programs and/or universal approaches that benefit all children. Both of these are already core tenets of the K-12 system. In contrast, K-3 will need to adapt a greater focus on the whole child; it is no longer appropriate to maintain strict adherence to reading, writing and arithmetic as educational fundamentals. K-3 will also need to expand its existing systems of accountability to incorporate measures of quality for programs and classrooms. Pre-k to 3rd is a two-way street.

Pre-k to 3rd is big-picture thinking that can overwhelm if it's not broken down into do-able parts, strategies, and components. The following are examples drawn from existing state efforts. No single state is doing it all. Some states are doing nothing at all. But there are many promising efforts in the field:

- Expand access to programs that are not currently available universally: developmental screenings and early intervention services; high-quality pre-k and child care; full-day kindergarten; and high-quality

after school and summer learning programs.

- Engage parents and families—because they are the most immediate, the most consistent, and the most important contexts for children’s daily lives. This can be accomplished by expanding resource and referral services, focusing on increasing the number of family-friendly work environments, or ensuring that information provided to parents is easily accessible in multiple languages and in multiple formats.
- Address the whole child by embedding this vision in official definitions of school readiness, learning standards, and professional development requirements. This can also be addressed by ensuring elementary schools have counselors and early childhood programs have mental health consultants.
- Define and assess multi-dimensional readiness by focusing not just on children’s characteristics, skills, and behaviors, but also on the readiness programs and institutional readiness to provide the learning environments that help young children thrive.
- Improve transitions between programs by creating and using common transition forms across districts; forming transition teams at state, local, and school levels; or establishing common, cross-system professional development for both K-3 teachers and the directors and lead teachers in early childhood programs.
- Establish standards for the quality of the programs themselves, for the qualifications of the adults who work in them, and for the experiences children have in those programs.
- Increase alignment of those standards, ensuring that there is consistency and predictability among them. Alignment is a central element of pre-k to 3rd. It can assume a number of different meanings; it ensures that the critical elements are coordinated so that the system works toward one common goal—supporting children to succeed. Beyond aligning standards themselves, the standards should be well aligned with curricula and assessments.
- Ensure continuity and consistency of children’s experiences by aligning teacher preparation and training, parental involvement, classroom organization, and school leadership across the pre-k to 3rd continuum. Find ways to support looping for teachers and mixed-age classrooms.

None of these are new ideas. What is innovative about this approach is the intentionality of taking each component seriously and systematically ensuring that they are put together.

Understanding what pre-k to 3rd looks like is more like a movie than a snapshot photo. Imagine, for instance, a baby named Alina:

- Visionary state policymakers, early childhood, and education professionals collaboratively developed guidelines for what children should know and be able to do—from birth through 3rd grade (and aligned with No Child Left Behind's required academic standards). The guidelines were created along a developmental continuum, highlighting how skill begets skill.
- These guidelines served as the basis for information sheets Alina's parents received at the hospital, telling them how to notice and encourage Alina's efforts to learn about her world—how to gain the attention of and interact with others, how to have her needs met, and how to explore her environment.
- These same guidelines were used by the directors and teachers in the child care center Alina entered when she was 8 weeks old, ensuring that the daily activities and classroom settings Alina experienced were contributing to her positive development and learning.
- These same guidelines were used by Alina's pre-k and full-day kindergarten programs, serving as the basis for the curriculum. Alina's parents and teachers would, together, assess and discuss her progress in learning new skills and behaviors.
- When Alina entered elementary school, the foundation for success had already been laid. The school district she entered had learning standards, with grade-level benchmarks, that built upon the very same guidelines that had influenced her multiple early-learning environments.
- Institutions of higher education—both 2- and 4-year colleges—built their own coursework and degree programs around the aligned early-learning guidelines and K-12 standards, ensuring that the teachers who taught Alina—from those in the child care center to her 3rd grade teachers—shared a common core set of knowledge and pedagogical tools that are most effective for working with young children.

There are innovative efforts at the local level in a sprinkling of sites around the nation, striving to build just this kind of experience for children, such as First School in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and The New School in Seattle, Washington. Changes at the implementation level are to be applauded; at the current scale, however, they will only positively impact a small number of children. Changes and improvements to state and national policy are what will institutionalize pre-k to 3rd principles and strategies, providing a more durable context that can support taking the implementation of best practices to scale. The challenge to each of us in the room, however, is to find ways that state policy can define, support, encourage, and incentivize efforts that improve the full pre-k to 3rd continuum.

Although some of the pre-k to 3rd grade components have been incorporated into most states' policy efforts, no single state has yet adopted a comprehensive policy approach to pre-k to 3rd. Some, however, are beginning to bring cohesion and alignment to their efforts. Two states (Colorado and Hawaii) anchor their efforts in broad P-20 Councils through sub-committee or working group efforts that are explicitly devoted to the pre-k to 3rd continuum.

Other states are doing pre-k to 3rd component work, as opposed to work across the full p-3rd continuum, within their P-20 efforts (e.g., Indiana expanded full-day kindergarten as a key priority of the P-20 Council). Other states do not have P-20 Councils, but are still undertaking efforts that address the full pre-k to 3rd continuum. New Jersey, for example, has created a pre-k to 3rd teacher certification.

As policymakers, you play a crucial role not only in creating and expanding new programs or allocating more funds. You also can help to establish expectations for how programs and people work together—by publicly speaking out on behalf of the importance of better aligning public programs and services for children from birth to age 8, by establishing and participating in cross-agency planning bodies, or by incorporating comprehensive definitions of school readiness into policy. You can help to shape the institutions that will implement and enforce future policy decisions, by helping to break down the “silo effect” of having child care, pre-k, and elementary schools operate under different state departments with discrepant standards, regulations, and oversight. The benefits of an aligned pre-k to 3rd system should not accrue only to some children in some school districts or in some neighborhoods or in some counties. The benefits should accrue to all children.

Learning and development are like climbing a ladder. One starts at the bottom rung, then climbs to the next, and then to the next, ultimately reaching the top. The importance of the sturdiness of each and every rung should not be underestimated. It would be very difficult to reach the top of a 12-foot ladder if only the first three feet of rungs were strong and sound; similarly, it would be difficult to reach the top if only the top three feet of rungs were strong and sound. Education is like this; it should be structured in such a way that all children have learning experiences that build on those in previous years and connect with those to come, creating a smooth and predictable climb to the top. Pre-k to 3rd aims to create a sturdy ladder for every child.





Dual Language Focus Gets Results

Testimony from Dr. Ellen Frede

Co-Director, National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER)

About the speaker:

A developmental psychologist, Ellen Frede has extensive experience in early childhood teacher education, program implementation, research, and policy. Prior to joining NIEER, she administered preschool for the state of New Jersey. Dr. Frede has provided professional development and programmatic consultation to government agencies throughout the U.S. and abroad.

More information: www.nieer.org

Summary

Age-appropriate dual language instruction leads to enhanced linguistic skills in both languages.

Testimony transcript:

Honorable Co-Chairs, members of the Committee, I am Dr. Ellen Frede, Co-Director of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) at Rutgers University. I am pleased to be invited to present testimony on the progress of the state of New Jersey in meeting the needs of young dual language learners. High-quality education that builds from preschool through 3rd grade for young children who are challenged with learning two languages exists but is not widespread. Successful education of dual language learners requires appropriate program standards at the state level, adequate funding, responsive and diligent technical assistance and monitoring, and innovative thinking. In my testimony I include information from NIEER on the national picture and draw on my recent experience as the pre-k administrator for the state of New Jersey.

My experience with early childhood education programs began as a summer volunteer in the early days of Head Start and progressed through teaching in child care, public school, and Head Start classrooms to being a teacher educator, researcher, and recently, administering state-funded preschool programs in New Jersey, which serve a large proportion of Latino children.

According to survey research conducted annually by NIEER, the number of 3- and 4-year-old children attending some form of center-based education has been increasing each year, with over 1 million children served in state-funded pre-kindergarten programs and over 900,000 served in Head Start in 2006-2007 (Barnett, Hustedt, Friedman, Stevenson-Boyd and Ainsworth; 2007). The 38 state pre-k programs serve 22% of all 4-year-olds. State funding for pre-k exceeds \$3.7 billion, with the average per child spending at \$3,642. In addition to state funded pre-k and Head Start, 3- and 4-year-olds also participate in a patchwork of other care and education settings, including locally-funded pre-k, special education (IDEA), private preschools and child care (privately funded by parents and subsidized by the government).

The complexity of preschool services is compounded by the fact that many children attend more than one

program and that preschool services in one agency are often funded through more than one source. For example, a child might go to a family child care provider (who may be a relative) in the early morning where the parent pays tuition, attend a half-day preschool Head Start program that combines state and federal dollars, and attend wrap-around child care subsidized with federal dollars that are administered by the state. Another child may attend a public school preschool classroom that combines local district moneys with Title I funding and IDEA to provide a program for children with disabilities and others deemed at risk of school failure. In the afternoon, she may go to a private preschool paid for by her parents.

In 2007, NIEER surveyed State Preschool administrators on the provision of services for English Language Learners (Garcia and Frede, forthcoming). In the 18 states that collect this information, the percent of enrolled children who were English Language Learners ranged from a high of 59% in Nevada to less than 1% in Vermont. Many of the states that serve a large proportion of their total 4-year-old population are also states with large Latino or other language-minority populations. For example, Oklahoma, Florida, Texas, New York, Illinois, and New Jersey are all in the top 15 states for access to preschool. However, Nevada, Oregon, Arizona, and New Mexico all serve less than 10% of their 4-year-old population in state-funded pre-k. Since Head Start and 27 state-funded preschool programs are targeted to low-income families, a relatively large proportion of the children served are likely from homes where English is not the primary language. This is especially likely given that 16 states also use home language as an eligibility criterion for preschool enrollment. Another seven states allow local districts to determine additional risk factors for enrollment and report that districts often use language spoken in the home as one criterion. Clearly, how to best educate this important and growing population is a concern for policymakers and practitioners.

It was certainly one that concerned me at first as a teacher educator and then again as a state pre-k administrator. From 2002 to 2005, my job at the state was primarily to oversee the implementation of a high-quality preschool program in the 31 lowest-income urban school districts in New Jersey. These districts have large Latino populations, and many of these children are from homes in which Spanish is spoken.

Initially, I was frustrated both by lack of data on characteristics of the children and programs in my state and by the lack of consistent policies. No state guidelines existed for recruitment of Latino and other minority children, how to best serve children who did not speak English in their home, or how to assess

progress of programs or children. Without data, I couldn't determine if there was systematic under-enrollment of Latino children, and if so where and why. I did not even know how many spoke Spanish and/or English at home or were in classrooms where at least one of the adults spoke Spanish. I certainly had no idea whether the provision of services in the preschool program was clearly related to that provided in kindergarten and the primary grades.

Without clear policies that were understood by all we had problems. Some districts tried to deny enrollment to children (mostly born in the U.S.) of undocumented parents in violation of state regulation. One mayor even tried to convince a school district to report on families that lived in high-density apartments that exceeded city housing laws. Equally concerning, without program standards based on sound research, districts tried to implement approaches to education of young English Language Learners that were accepted practices for older children but were not reasonable for 3- to 5-year-olds. For example, even though the primary purpose of preschool education is always improving children's language skills—because all young children are English Language Learners—districts that had any specific services for Latino children either segregated children by home language and predominately still taught in English or pulled children out of class where they were learning English to have special instruction in English.

For the most part, systematic approaches to bilingual education did not exist even within districts. For example, kindergarten teachers in “bilingual” classrooms in one district reported using widely varied methods of English immersion, Spanish immersion, and dual language. In another district, it was discovered that the pre-assessment of children's home language was so faulty that children who spoke Quechua at home were placed in Spanish-only classrooms.

This should not have been surprising to me, since as a teacher educator I had already seen how ill-prepared the work force was for teaching this population. In the college where I taught for many years, education students are not even required to take one semester of a foreign language. A national study of teacher preparation programs (Early & Winton, 2001) found they rarely offer substantive coursework in linguistic and cultural diversity. A study of practicing preschool teachers in New Jersey found that only 66.1% of respondents reported participating in coursework to prepare them for working with students who are dual language learners (Ryan, Ackerman and Song, 2006).

Now, the story in New Jersey is no longer so bleak—though truly exemplary practices in preschool through 3rd grade for this population are still too dependent on the individual mix of personnel who have the expertise and commitment. For example, one district led the way with a well-articulated curriculum that is:

- Benchmarked preschool through 12.
- Requires that teachers become specialized in bilingual or ESL or in special education prior to attaining tenure.
- Has a systematic approach to supporting Spanish language while teaching English no matter what age the child enrolls in the district.

Other districts are following suit. Other districts hold regular meetings of the district administrators in charge of early childhood and bilingual education, in order to develop and implement coherent plans.

However, another district with a successful two-way immersion preschool program segregates children when they reach kindergarten into bilingual, English as a Second Language, or English immersion. So the English speakers who were learning Spanish lose it, and the Spanish speakers who were mastering English either quit having support in Spanish or lose ground in English.

To support effective practices, New Jersey promulgated regulations and program standards based on specific guidance for districts in strategies to support this population and provided state-level professional development to support implementation. This guidance urged programs to support the home language of children with specific teaching techniques and to have, as a goal, bilingualism for all children.

Regulations required that districts meet the following:

- Have on staff at least one teacher-coach who is a specialist in bilingual or English as a Second Language education to provide professional development to other teachers and coaches in effective services for dual language learners.
- Develop transition plans for all children that establish seamless and connected educational programming in conjunction with bilingual education plans to meet the criteria listed in the box below.



New Jersey PreSchool Self Assessment and Validation System

Supporting English Language Learners Component

Criterion 1: All English language learners receive systematic support for home and English language acquisition in their natural preschool environment.

Indicators:

- ☐ Classrooms are equipped with literacy materials in the home languages of the children in the class.
- ☐ Lesson plans show strategies for supporting the home language of each child in the classroom.
- ☐ Lesson plans show intentional activities to scaffold ELL children's learning of English.
- ☐ Structured classroom observations are used as planning tools to support English language learners in the classroom.
- ☐ Administrative support ensures that all directors, building principals and classroom teachers receive results of the home language survey.
- ☐ Administrative supports are provided to the maximum extent possible to address the needs of children from every language background, (including the provision of classroom materials, resources, professional networking and support, and assistance with developing general strategies and lesson plans).

Criterion 2: Teachers receive appropriate supports to meet the needs of English language learners.

Indicators:

- ☐ Teachers receive professional development in techniques and materials needed for creating a language-rich environment that facilitates learning of the child's home or primary language, as well as English.
- ☐ The master teacher specializing in bilingual education models, coaches and provides feedback to master teachers and teachers in how to facilitate language acquisition, and to promote oral language in the preschool setting. In smaller districts, this may be a function for a regular master teacher who has received specialized training to provide support for teachers in this area.
- ☐ Teachers receive professional development in general language development, individual differences in second-language learning, best practices for scaffolding to English, as well as sensitivity to cultural backgrounds.

Criterion 3: Families of English language learners receive adequate support in the preschool program.

Indicators:

- ☐ Parents are made aware of the importance of maintaining both languages and are provided with examples of tools and techniques to extend this learning at home.
- ☐ District staff as well as parent or community volunteers, provide home language translation, explain cultural issues to program staff and assist with outreach to families as needed.

As a result of these standards and requirements these changes took place:

- Of the teachers who have Spanish-speaking children in their classrooms, 50% speak Spanish themselves; and the majority of classrooms have at least one adult who speaks Spanish. This percentage increases each year.
- In 2002, adults in the classroom who spoke Spanish, primarily teacher assistants, mostly used Spanish to give directions or reprimands. In 2006, classrooms were observed to be good in “promoting the maintenance and development of children’s native language.” With professional development this improves each year.
- In addition, children in these preschool classrooms are entering kindergarten with measurable improvements in their early language, literacy, and mathematics abilities and these improvements are being sustained into the early grades.

The following are recommendations for elected officials concerned about the education of young children whose heritage language is not English.

At the local and state level:

- Provide support for collaboration among districts officials, churches, Head Start, and Latino community groups.
- Convince other policymakers, practitioners and parents that education supporting dual language acquisition is important.
- Develop data systems to aid in decision making.
- Encourage Spanish speakers to become teachers.
- Establish program and learning standards that enhance dual language acquisition.

At the state and national level, enact legislation to support:

- Scholarships or direct funding to colleges and universities for Spanish-speakers to become teachers with good facility in English and for English-speakers to become teachers with good facility in Spanish.
- Teacher licensure that requires coursework in a foreign language and acquisition and teaching of dual language learners.
- Collection of statewide data on the characteristics of programs, teachers, and children to facilitate data-based decision making.

These and other initiatives will not only benefit children who speak a language other than English at home but help effect the goal of “every graduate bilingual,” which will make our nation culturally richer and more understanding, as well as better positioned for the global political and economic challenges we face.



Keeping the Momentum Going through Aligning Systems

Testimony from the Hon. Jesse H. Ruiz

Chairman, Illinois State Board of Education

About the speaker:

Appointed in 2001, the Honorable Jesse Ruiz is a partner at Drinker Biddle Gardner Carton, where he specializes in corporate law. Additionally, he is the chief legal counsel to the State Representatives and Senators who founded the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus. He has previously served as a Commissioner of the Chicago Board of Education, on the Chicago Public Schools Desegregation Monitoring Commission, and as a Commissioner of the Illinois Supreme Court.

More information: www.isbe.state.il.us

Summary

Starting with establishing a state commission on early education, Illinois found continued success through longitudinal tracking of achievement, principal and administrator training, and increasing access through community involvement.

Testimony transcript:

Illinois has a long history of high-quality state-funded early childhood education and family support services. Our nationally recognized Preschool for All program continues a more than 20-year commitment to high-quality early childhood education, whose aim has been to serve families and children in the birth-to-age-5 range. We have done so with a clear ultimate goal of increasing our children's success in school. Illinois is also home to a rapidly growing population of English Language Learner immigrants, whose rapidly growing families have resulted in increasing numbers of English Language Learner students entering our public schools.

In 1998, Illinois became the first state to tie funding for birth-to-3 services to its 3-to-5-year-old funding. The birth-to-3 set-aside, now at 11% of total early childhood funding, funds the Prevention Initiative to provide intensive services, using researched-based program models, to the most at-risk families with children under the age of three. Children who have been served by the Prevention Initiative transition into the state-funded preschool program, extending the continuum of high-quality early learning and development experiences to age five.



Over the years, our state-funded preschool program has received high marks from the National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER), based on designated quality standards. Increased access to state-funded preschool program has been a priority. The Illinois Early Learning Council, a public-private group, is charged with advising the state on issues related to early childhood. Together with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and with the support of the Illinois General Assembly, the state commenced a multi-year annual increase in early childhood funding.

In 2006, based on the recommendations of the Illinois Early Learning Council, Illinois Preschool for All was established, and became the first state-funded preschool program to offer services to all 3- and 4-year-olds whose parents choose to send them to preschool. Preschool for All puts the state preschool program on a path to universal status as funding becomes available and increases. Enrollment priority is given to children who are at risk of school failure, with second priority going to children of lower-middle-income households. The program is widely available, located in public, private, and charter schools, for-profit and not-for profit child care centers, faith-based organizations, institutions of higher education, community colleges, and community and governmental agencies, such as park districts.

Illinois Preschool for All sets high standards for early education programs. Classroom teachers must hold early childhood teaching certification, the program must follow a research-based curriculum and assessment that is aligned with the Illinois Early Learning Standards, and each program must develop and implement a plan for parent involvement, staff development, and community collaboration.

The expansion of Preschool for All has been accompanied by funding for several quality initiatives recommended by the Early Learning Council: to strengthen the infrastructure of the program, to increase support to program staff, and to enhance services to children. Included in these initiatives are a teacher preparation program for hard-to-serve communities, a social/emotional training and consultation network that provides technical assistance to early childhood staff on issues of healthy behavioral development of children, and a training and technical assistance institute for birth-to-3 programs. Also funded were a monitoring and technical assistance project and a multi-year system evaluation.

This year, the state will serve almost 100,000 children in Preschool for All. More than 30% of these 3- and 4-year-olds will come into the program speaking a language other than English. Most often, these children will come from homes where only Spanish is spoken. The representation of English Language Learners in our early childhood program has increased dramatically over the past eight years. While most of these children live in urban areas (enrollment in the Chicago Public Schools' early childhood program is 48% Latino), communities across the state are becoming home to non-English speaking families.

The Early Learning Council and the Illinois State Board of Education have taken steps to address the unique learning needs of these children and their families. The Early Learning Council has formed a committee to study and make recommendations for reaching out to culturally and linguistically diverse populations. The Illinois State Board of Education has stepped up efforts to identify and evaluate English Language Learner students as preschoolers. We have worked in communities with significant language minority populations to identify and upgrade facilities to house Preschool for All programs, funded collaborations between higher education and local communities to prepare early childhood bilingual teachers, and conducted town hall meetings in Latino communities to provide awareness of early childhood grant funds and programs to providers, parents, and community leaders. We are also working on developing targeted funding to help ensure that many communities that are currently underserved, including many Latino communities, have the infrastructure they need to deliver Preschool for All.

An especially successful collaboration was formed as a result of a state Board of Education Town Hall early childhood meeting in Cicero, a predominantly Latino community just outside of Chicago.

Representatives from the school district, park district, child care centers, a not-for-profit early childhood organization, a faith-based organization, a local community college and a network of Spanish-speaking home-child care providers worked with the Illinois State Board of Education to develop a plan for serving the 800 3- and 4-year-old Spanish-speaking children that were on waiting lists for existing programs.

Children are provided preschool in a variety of settings throughout the city, and the formation of a community early childhood advisory group among providers and public school officials assures a smooth transition into the K-12 system. Providers are aware of the status of their students as they progress into elementary school and are able to make program adjustments based on this information.

Data collected and reported by the state Board of Education and local school districts on the progress of our early childhood students in the K-12 system indicates that children in general benefit from the preschool experience. We know, however, that two years of half-day preschool is not going to ensure the school success of our most at-risk children, including many language minority students. These children will have a significantly greater chance of academic success if the principles and practices of our high-quality early childhood education continuum and those of K-3 education are aligned.

In addressing this issue, we have begun to focus on the elementary school principal and/or administrator as an important agent in the extension of the early learning continuum. The Illinois State Board of Education has developed and offered professional training for elementary school principals, based on early childhood program standards published by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP).

Additionally, the Chicago-based McCormick Foundation has funded two initiatives that address this issue. One project, awarded to the University of Illinois at Chicago, incorporates early childhood education and pre-k to 3rd alignment information in coursework for aspiring school principals. Another, awarded to the Center for the Study of Education Policy at Illinois State University, will study the state of pre-k to 3rd alignment in preschool education and K-12 education in Illinois for the purpose of identifying gaps and potential causes. Ultimately, the research will inform policy recommendations made by the project's advisory committee for developing and sustaining the pre-k to 3rd continuum.

In Illinois, we have worked diligently to coordinate early childhood programs and initiatives across agencies into a system of high-quality early education services for children under the age of five. Preschool for All funding has grown to \$380 million, with almost \$200 million of that coming in just the past six years. We continue to prioritize funding to programs serving our most at-risk preschoolers, including a rapidly growing population of children coming from homes where English is not spoken.

In order to maximize the impact of our investment and the potential of these children, it is important for us to turn our attention to preschool alignment with K-12 in the form of a pre-k to 3rd continuum. This continuum, providing a strong foundation of six years of well-aligned educationally and developmentally

sound practice, can provide the support that enables the thousands of young English Language Learner students in Illinois to achieve success in school and throughout their lives. Providing support to educational leaders at every level along this continuum will be of critical importance.

While many states like Illinois have done tremendous work on advancing early childhood education, there is also much work to be done here in Congress. We know that Congress has been considering legislation focused on the first five years, on topics including pre-k and home visiting. We welcome a new partnership with the federal government, building on our longstanding commitment to coordinate state-level programs with Head Start and other federal programs. From our work, we would suggest that the most successful federal legislation would do the following:

- Encourage states to develop thoughtful plans for service delivery and expansion, and think holistically about their many programs for children from birth to age five.
- Maintain the federal government's traditional focus on those children most at risk of school failure.
- Uphold a commitment to quality, which is absolutely necessary to achieve our ultimate goal of improving outcomes for children.



Hon. Ana Sol-Gutiérrez

Public Investment: Approaches to Determining and Locating Funding at the State Level

Early Education Funding: Strategies for Creating Effective Programs

Dr. Libby Doggett, Executive Director, Pre-K Now, testified on the need to first define what makes a high-quality early education program. She then analyzed how states have used different strategies ranging from excise taxes to general funds to fund effective early education programs.

Developing a Model for Early Education Funding

Dr. Lawrence O. Picus, Professor at the University of Southern California Rossier School of Education and director of the Center for Research in Education Finance, described and demonstrated an economic model through which states can determine spending per child for quality early education programs, using several types of variables.

Early Education Funding: Strategies for Creating Effective Programs

Testimony from Dr. Libby Doggett

Executive Director, Pre-K Now

About the speaker:

Now a deputy director with the Pew Center on the States, Libby Doggett directs the Pre-K Now effort to educate state policymakers, the media, and the general public about the potential of pre-kindergarten to improve outcomes for young children. Previously, Dr. Doggett directed the Heads Up! Reading program for the National Head Start Association and served the U.S. Department of Education as both a special assistant to the director of special education (OSEP) and as the executive director of the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council.

More information: www.pre-know.org

Summary

Despite the economic downturn, more states are funding early education, using sources ranging from excise taxes to general funds. States can analyze their funding options with the goal of consistently meeting standards for high-quality early education.

Testimony transcript:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I know you are here in our nation's capital today because you believe as I do that the earliest years of a child's life are the most important, and that we as a country have failed to create accessible, affordable, high-quality programs that support children and families during this critical time.

My husband and I are watching, now as grandparents, just how much children change during these vital days, months, and years. Week by week, our two young granddaughters grow in size and develop new capacities. Before our very eyes, we can actually see them acquire the fundamental knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that will largely shape what and who each will become.



But as we all know, far too often, in this, the richest country in the world, children do not get what they need to grow, learn, and thrive during these early years of great promise. As a result, instead of meeting their potential, too many children face social, educational, or health disturbances that put them on a downward trajectory with tremendous human and fiscal costs. These are years when missed opportunities—to establish strong families, build self-discipline, instill a love of learning, and foster positive health—can initiate chronic dysfunction or disability and lost potential.

The good news is that while young children have many needs, we are here because local and state leaders are doing one very specific thing right now to help children enter school (and life) better prepared to learn and thrive.

Tomorrow, Pre-K Now will release a new report analyzing state budget action on pre-k for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. What we found was startling. Despite an economic downturn for fiscal 2009, lawmakers in 32 states and the District of Columbia wisely supported increased pre-k investments. Clearly, a poor economy is no excuse for neglecting these critical programs today.

I want to thank you all for your commitment thus far. You already know that funding quality education and support services for young children is one of the best ways to invest limited resources and help prevent future economic downturns. I hope what you hear here today will further inform and strengthen your commitment and ultimately convinces the state and local leaders who have yet to support investments in pre-k that there is a way—even in tough budget years—to make the most of these critical early learning years.

Before I discuss funding approaches, it is important to address the great variation in the types of pre-k programs and services paid for by the states. For example:

- Eight states and the District have determined that pre-k needs to be the starting point for all children, not just those at risk. These states (FL, GA, IL, IA, LA, NY, OK, WV, and DC) are funding, or planning to fund over the next four years, pre-k for every 4-year-old whose family chooses to enroll them. Illinois and the District are also including all 3-year-olds.
- Other states, some because of limited funding, others because of politics, restrict pre-k eligibility, usu-

ally to low-income children; although some also include other factors such as English Language Learner status or a family's military involvement.

- A few states (OR, DE, MN) are building their pre-k system using the federal Head Start program guidelines and assuring access for the 40% to 50% of children not covered by the limited federal funding.
- All states are now building their systems using what the field calls a mixed—or diverse—delivery system. States allow public and private child care and preschool programs that are willing to meet the higher standards of pre-k to become a part of the system.

So as you build your pre-k systems, whether at the state or local level, you will face a number of choices and potential tradeoffs that all have clear spending implications. Should you:

- Fund half-day, school-day, or work-day schedules?
- Restrict access to 4-year-olds or include 3-year-olds?
- Provide comprehensive family support services, including health screenings and parenting classes?

I encourage you to think about ways to supplement and sustain current funding streams for pre-k programs in your state. Learn from other states' successes and be both strategic and creative. Specifically, I would like to recommend five things for you to do in the next five years:

1. **Fund pre-k in your state:** And I will provide examples of where funding can be drawn from.
2. **Make sure pre-k is high quality:** We will talk a little more about what that means;
3. **Fund professional development:** I will explain why this is especially important for communities with high populations of English Language Learners.
4. **Educate your federal elected officials about pre-k, Head Start, and child care.**
5. **Help develop a broader vision for young children.**

1. Fund pre-k in your state.

In allocating state dollars, you must constantly choose between competing policy priorities. Policymakers are looking for efficient, stable, and growing sources of revenue so that states can offer high-quality programs and provide access for more children. One source used by 35 states: general revenue funds, which are usually derived from a combination of sales, income, property, and other taxes from fees levied by the government. These funds help provide steady but modest increases in pre-k allocations, are highly flexible, and in economically sound times can be plentiful. Even in economic downturns, some legislatures may be reluctant to cut funding for popular and important education programs.

Funding pre-k with general revenue, however, requires annual (or bi-annual) legislative approval and as a result, is susceptible to cuts. Eleven states and the District currently allocate pre-k funds through their school funding formulas. This protects and advances state pre-k by tying funding to enrollment and to the popular support for K-12 education:

- Oklahoma in 1990 added pre-k to the funding formula to serve low-income children and gradually increased eligibility and access. The state program is now open to all 4-year-olds and serves the highest proportion of 4-year-olds of any state in the nation (70%).
- In 2001, West Virginia made all 4-year-olds eligible for pre-k through their school funding formula and set a 10-year deadline to get there by allowing districts to work at their own pace and develop plans for expanding access. I am pleased to report that West Virginia is right on track to have pre-k for all by the 2012-13 school year.

While the exact formulas differ, they generally provide funding to school districts based on the number of children who attend (or who are eligible in any given district), with per-child reimbursement amounts adjusted for various other factors such as low-income or English Language Learner status. Both Maryland and Texas require school districts to serve all eligible low-income children, and the states provide funding to support districts in doing so.

For states without a cap on enrollment, the primary advantage in using the school funding formula for pre-k is that funding rises with increasing enrollment and will only decrease if general education expenditures diminish. Further, voters tend to oppose cuts in public education; so including pre-k in the school funding formula provides stable, politically secure funding.

An inability to secure sufficient general revenue funds has led some states to create dedicated funding streams for pre-k. These sources, which have been substantial in a number of states, range from lottery and gaming revenues to tobacco settlement money and tobacco taxes. Earmarking special revenue sources for pre-k has generated more public support than a general tax increase, and funding has been structured to prohibit diversion of dedicated monies to other public programs. On the other hand, limitations in income from earmarked sources, particularly specialized taxes, have resulted in insufficient funding for pre-k. For example, Missouri, which funds its state pre-k program using gaming revenues, has not seen an increase in three years.

Three states—Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee—use dedicated lottery funds for pre-k. The use of lottery money, as you know, can be quite controversial. The advantages of lottery funding for pre-k are obvious and considerable: lotteries provide significant funds that boost investment in education. Of the 42 states and the District of Columbia that run lotteries, 23 dedicate at least a portion of the proceeds to education. On the other hand, lotteries are regressive taxes because low-income citizens tend to play more while the well-off may benefit disproportionately from the educational scholarships and improvements that lottery proceeds support.

Excise taxes can also be an important source of revenue for pre-k, converting public health and other challenges into positive social benefits. Of course, the fact that the taxes are designed as a disincentive means that, over time, the revenue stream steadily dwindles. Another drawback of this funding approach is that most “sin” taxes are considered regressive. Nonetheless, these taxes have helped a number of states jumpstart a pre-k program as leaders develop a long-term funding strategy.

California is a leader in the use of dedicated sin taxes to increase funding for pre-k. In 1998, Californians voted to add a 50-cent tax to every pack of cigarettes sold. Under the law, each county set up a First 5 Commission to create a spending plan and distribute funds. Several of these commissions have directed

the bulk of their funds to implement pre-k programs. Los Angeles County launched the Los Angeles Universal Preschool (or LAUP) program in 2004. San Mateo, Alameda, San Francisco, and other counties have followed L.A.'s lead. Unfortunately, funding from the state First 5 Commission is steadily decreasing as tobacco tax revenues decline.

From 2001-07, Arkansas levied a 3% tax on the sale of beer (about 18 cents per six-pack), 80% of which was dedicated to funding the Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Pre-K program. With support from both early education advocates and the beer lobby, a sunset provision was included in the initial legislation. This small, time-limited tax proved an effective catalyst for pre-k in Arkansas. It expired in 2007, but by then, the state's modest program had blossomed into high-quality pre-k for every low-income 3- and 4-year-old up to 200% of poverty. In 2007, the legislature replaced the \$6.9 million in lost beer-tax funds with other public funds and raised total general revenue funding for pre-k to \$111 million.

South Carolina draws on several sources to fund its pre-k program, but one unique element is the use of sales tax revenues. The Education Improvement Act (EIA) dedicates 1% of state sales taxes to education programs, including grants to pre-k programs for 4-year-olds.

The challenge for each of you is to determine what funding method is most likely to garner political support in your state. Once a funding source is identified, be sure it is sufficient to support a high-quality, voluntary, accessible pre-k program. The next question to ask is, "Is that funding source protected from political wrangling and from swings in the state's economic health?" Finally, examine whether that funding source can support increases in spending as the pre-k program improves in quality and grows to serve all children.

2. Make sure pre-k is high quality.

When states have limited funding, you are forced to decide whether to invest your funds to improve quality and or to expand access. We always recommend you improve quality. It is much easier to expand a small but high-quality program as state leaders are doing in Alabama, Tennessee and North Carolina, than it is to improve poor quality in a program that serves thousands of children. The promise of pre-k—those positive outcomes demonstrated by decades of research—is realized only from high-quality programs.

So, what does “high quality” look like?

- When you walk into a high-quality pre-k program, you immediately see learning taking place.
- Children are engaged in small groups, reading books, building interesting structures with blocks, and determining what sinks and what floats at the water table.
- Teachers are asking questions and guiding learning.
- The room has a sense of purpose, organization, and excitement.

Research shows that children who attend high-quality pre-k programs perform better in school and throughout life. They have more advanced language and math skills and enter kindergarten with an understanding of the classroom environment. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) has created a 10-point checklist that evaluates the quality of Pre-K programs nationwide. Some of the key components of a high-quality program include:

- Well-educated teachers: The most effective pre-k teachers have earned bachelor's degrees and have additional, specialized training in early-childhood education. Once hired, pre-k teachers must receive salaries and benefits comparable to K-12 teachers so they are incentivized to perform at a high level and to pursue continuing education.
- Low teacher-child ratios and small class sizes: Young children learn best in small groups of no more than 20 children in which they can ask and answer questions while receiving individualized attention from the teacher.
- Research-based curriculum aligned to K-12 standards: High-quality pre-k programs are built around curricula with specific goals that integrate learning across all aspects of a child's development: cognitive, physical, social, and emotional.
- Engaged families: Parents and extended family members are an integral part of any high-quality pre-k program. High-quality pre-k programs respect the role of families as a child's first and most important teachers and support efforts toward greater learning at home.
- Focus on the whole child and family: Children cannot learn when their basic needs are unmet or when special needs go undiagnosed.

To help you make informed decisions about the costs associated with these quality measures, Pre-K Now partnered with the Institute for Women's Policy Research to release the report, "Meaningful Investments in Pre-K: Estimating the Per-Child Costs of Quality Programs," which examines the costs associated with improvements to teacher education and pay and class size, two major components of pre-k that have a large impact on child outcomes. By these criteria, three of the largest states in the country—California, Florida, and Texas—have poor-quality pre-k programs. And all three of these states have large numbers of Latino children in their poor quality programs.

3. Fund professional development.

This is probably the most important investment you can make if your state has limited funds. A highly qualified and bilingual teacher best understands the unique needs and strengths of all families and can provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services for Latino children because he or she reflects that community. All states should actively recruit bilingual staff within Latino communities and then provide them specific training, technical assistance, flexible scheduling, mentoring, and scholarships. Colleges and universities should be engaged as partners to ensure that Latinos are recruited to the early education field and that all pre-k teachers are trained in teaching strategies for second-language acquisition and in strategies for working with linguistically and culturally diverse children and families.

Articulation—the process of comparing courses within a field for transfer from one higher education institution to another—requires agreements between two- and four-year colleges outlining which courses can be transferred for credits. Without such agreements, many students who move from pursuing an Associate's degree to a Bachelor's degree are required to repeat classes. Lack of articulation agreements can significantly slow the process of building a qualified corps of pre-k educators and waste public dollars. Institutions of higher education have been slow to address articulation problems, prompting state officials to pass legislation mandating agreements and even setting up alternative degrees.

One of the best ways to build a state pre-k system is to work with child care programs and providers who already spend their days with young children. The TEACH program provides funding for child care professionals to attend classes at a participating college or university and earn credits toward a CDA or an

associate or bachelor's degree in early childhood education. While the components of the TEACH program vary from state to state, the scholarship is different from other professional development funds in that it will pay up to 80% of the cost of books and tuition, provide a travel stipend, help pay for a substitute, and provide a salary increase after completion of contracted credit hours. TEACH programs are already in place in several states and are funded through a combination of public and private dollars.

4. This is something you can do without having to appropriate a single dollar: educate your federal elected officials about pre-k, Head Start, and child care.

Congress has recently taken significant steps to improve the availability of high-quality pre-k education. Changes in federal policy that benefit the education of young children include:

- Increasing the number of Head Start teachers required to have bachelor's degrees.
- Requiring states to appoint advisory councils to oversee early childhood systems development.
- Including pre-k, Head Start, and child care teachers in special student-loan relief programs that will make their training more affordable.

One change that passed through committee, but will likely not make it to a full House vote, was legislation proposed by Representative Mazie Hirono of Hawaii to create a federal grant to improve pre-k quality in the states. This would encourage states to make wise investments in their pre-k programs, improve quality, and build enrollment.

Without increased federal appropriations for existing and newly authorized children's programs, the reforms described here will be paper tigers. Congress should restore full funding to Head Start and the Child Care and Development Fund, both of which have suffered crippling losses in purchasing power over the past eight years.

Congress should also fulfill its role in advancing the growth and quality of state pre-k by reserving funding for a pre-k incentive grant in the fiscal 2010 budget. Pre-k occupied a major position in the presidential primary campaigns; so lawmakers should be ready for a new mandate to support high-quality pre-k from the next administration.

5. Help develop a broader vision for young children.

This is something I hope you do immediately upon returning to your states. I mentioned that Congress passed a requirement as part of the 2007 Head Start reauthorization that the governor of each state designate or appoint a State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care. These Councils are charged with conducting a periodic statewide assessment of the quality and availability of early education services for children from birth to school entry; identifying opportunities for collaboration and coordination among entities carrying out these programs; and developing recommendations for increasing the participation of children in existing federal, state, and local early education and care programs. Another important charge of these councils is to develop recommendations for establishing a unified data collection system for publicly funded programs offering early education, development, and services and for a statewide professional development and career plan for early education and care.

This presents a tremendous opportunity for states. As state legislators, you can develop and approve legislation that fully describes the role of the Council in your state. I encourage you to seek out opportunities to serve officially or even informally on the Council and use the opportunity to study and address the very issues you have been learning about here today: pre-k funding, quality, access, eligibility, and alignment.

To conclude, we know these are tough economic times, and states are financially strapped. I know that policymakers, like you, require solid cost information to make effective decisions and to ensure that funding is adequate to provide high-quality educational opportunities. I hope that with this information you will strive to:

1. Fund pre-k in your state.
2. Make sure pre-k is high quality.
3. Fund professional development.
4. Educate your federal elected officials.
5. Help develop a broader vision for young children.

Pre-k is not a luxury—it is an essential response to the early learning needs of young children. High-quality pre-k significantly improves children’s ability to thrive in school and later in life. The persistent achievement gap—especially among Latino children and their peers—will not be closed until all children have the opportunity to come to kindergarten prepared to succeed. The numerous social, economic, and educational benefits from pre-k are well documented, and the public overwhelmingly supports expansion of these critical educational services. We hope that you will return to your communities and make pre-k for every young child a reality.



Developing a Model for Early Education Funding

Testimony from Dr. Lawrence O. Picus

Director Center for Research in Education Finance, University of Southern California

About the speaker:

In addition to directing the Center for Research in Education Finance, Lawrence Picus is also a professor at the USC Rossier School of Education. His research focuses on adequacy and equity in school finance, as well as efficiency and productivity in the provision of educational programs for pre-k to 12th grades.

His most recent books include: *School Finance: A Policy Perspective, 4th Edition* (2008) with Allan Odden; *In Search of More Productive Schools: A Guide to Resource Allocation in Education*, published by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management in January, 2001; and *Developing Community Empowered Schools* (Corwin, 2001), coauthored with Mary Ann Burke.

Summary

An integrative costing model that includes an evidence-based approach to school finance adequacy is available to help policymakers determine the amount of funding necessary to provide a quality pre-k to 3rd grade program in individual states.

Note on the testimony content:

Support for this research was provided by the Foundation for Child Development. The opinions expressed in this document are those of the author. The Foundation for Child Development is a national private philanthropy in New York City dedicated to promoting a new beginning for American education from pre-k through 3rd grade. The Foundation promotes the well being of children, and believes that families, schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and government at all levels share complementary responsibilities in the critical task of raising new generations.

More information: www.fcd-us.org

Testimony Transcript:

The American public and policymakers are realizing that if all children are to meet their states' education performance standards, an important part of helping them do so is the provision of high-quality integrated pre-k through 3rd grade education programs. The pre-k to 3rd approach starts with 3-year-olds and focuses on providing educational experiences to 3- and 4-year-old children on a universal, voluntary basis, followed by required full-day kindergarten. Effective pre-k to 3rd provides the following components:

- High-quality and unified learning in well-staffed classrooms.
- Well prepared teachers and aides (for 3- and 4-year-olds) to educate children in the 3- to 8-year age range.
- Supportive school district policies.
- Strong principal leadership that includes supporting professional development time for teachers to plan for effective coordination across and between grades.
- Includes families and communities that share accountability with pre-k to 3rd schools for children's educational success.

What will a quality Pre-K to 3rd program cost?

To answer that question, with support from the Foundation for Child Development, Lawrence O. Picus and Associates developed a comprehensive and flexible costing model that uses our evidence-based approach to school finance adequacy (Odden and Picus, 2008). We also conducted site visits in six locations to ascertain whether or not the resources identified in our model were adequate to provide integrated, high-quality pre-k to 3rd programs that would enhance the likelihood that all children would be able to meet their states' educational performance standards. My purpose today is to share our findings with you.

Assuming the components of the evidence-based adequacy model were implemented for all pre-k to 3rd programs, we estimate that the likely additional national costs of providing adequate pre-k to 3rd grade programs range from \$27.4 billion to \$78.7 billion depending on the number of 3- and 4-year-old children eligible for, and electing to participate in pre-k programs⁶⁷. On a per-child served (pre-k to 3rd) basis, additional costs range from \$2,095 to \$3,975.

⁶⁷ These figures assume that any state that funds pre-k to 3rd programs above the adequate level estimated using the evidence-based approach continue to expend those resources for education. That is, these figures "hold harmless" those states where education expenditures exceed our estimates and therefore represent the national cost to bring every state to at least an adequate level. In addition, these numbers assume a maximum of 65% participation in pre-k programs.

If we assume universal eligibility for 3- and 4-year-old children, with a participation rate of 65% — a number that approximates pre-k program participation in Oklahoma, a state with universal access for 4-year-olds—and pre-k class size of 20 students with a teacher and an instructional aide, the estimated total pre-k to 3rd costs are \$215 billion or \$10,867 per pre-k to 3rd student. This represents an increase of \$71.5 billion or \$3,626 per pre-k to 3rd grade pupil.

In this study we determine the costs of an integrated pre-k to 3rd education system by estimating:

- The number of 3- and 4-year-old children in each state.
- The costs of providing pre-k programs for those children (as well as for subsets of 3- and 4-year-olds stratified by poverty level and participation rates).
- The costs of public school programs for grades K-3 for all children.
- Any additional costs associated with integration of pre-k programs with existing public K-3 schools.
- The net public costs of that system.

The Evidence-Based Method of School Finance Adequacy

This study relied on the evidence-based method for estimating the resources necessary for a high-quality education program. Although not the only method available for estimating what is known as school finance adequacy, the evidence-based method has been used in a number of states and forms the basis for the school funding systems in Arkansas and Wyoming. Moreover, it has been used previously to estimate resources needed for both high quality pre-k and K-12 programs, facilitating development of an integrated model.

The evidence-based approach relies on the best available educational research to identify strategies that when implemented at the school level will lead to dramatic gains in student achievement over a four- to six-year time frame ⁶⁸.

68 The research supporting the evidence-based model is described in detail in Chapter 4 of Odden, A.R., and Picus, L.O. (2008). *School Finance: A Policy Perspective*, 4th edition. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Figure 1 identifies the components of the evidence-based model. These include:

- Class sizes of 15 in grades K-3 (our model allows estimation of the costs of both 15- and 20-student classes at the pre-k level, each with a teacher and instructional aide).
- Specialist teachers to provide a rich liberal arts program, including music, art, and physical education, and to provide for planning and collaboration time for core teachers. These are resourced at a rate of 20% of core teachers.
- Classroom aides in all pre-k classrooms (pre-k only).
- Strategies for struggling students (K-3 only) including:
 - Certificated tutors for short-term intensive help, so that students return to the regular program at grade level as quickly as possible, also providing additional resources for children who are at risk of falling behind.
 - Extended-day programs.
 - Summer school.
- Resources for children with special needs and/or disabilities.
- Funding for professional development including:
 - Additional teacher time for comprehensive summer workshops focused on teaching and learning.
 - Instructional coaches in each school at a ratio of one coach for every 200 students.
 - Funds for trainers and consultants.
- Staff for pupil support (guidance counselors, nurses, social workers, family liaison, etc.).
- Staff resources for school site leadership.
- Staff resources for district administration.
- Dollar resources for:
 - Instructional materials.
- Technology.
- Operations, maintenance, and utilities.
- Central office operations.

The costs of these resources are estimated for a set of prototypical schools and then summed to the district and state level to provide an estimate of adequate school funding costs. For this study, we estimated the resource needs of existing K-3 students in each state as well as the additional resources that would be needed for pre-k programs under a variety of assumptions regarding both pre-k eligibility and participation rates. We also developed estimates of program costs for pre-k class sizes of 15 and 20 students.

To estimate the costs of an integrated pre-k to 3rd program, we developed a comprehensive and flexible model that estimates the state-by-state costs of this program. Using data from 2005-06 (the most recent year for which data for all model components was available) the model includes K-3 enrollment by state as well as Census Bureau estimates of the number of 3- and 4-year-old children in each state.

The Evidence-Based Model:

A Research Driven Approach to Linking Resources to Student Performance

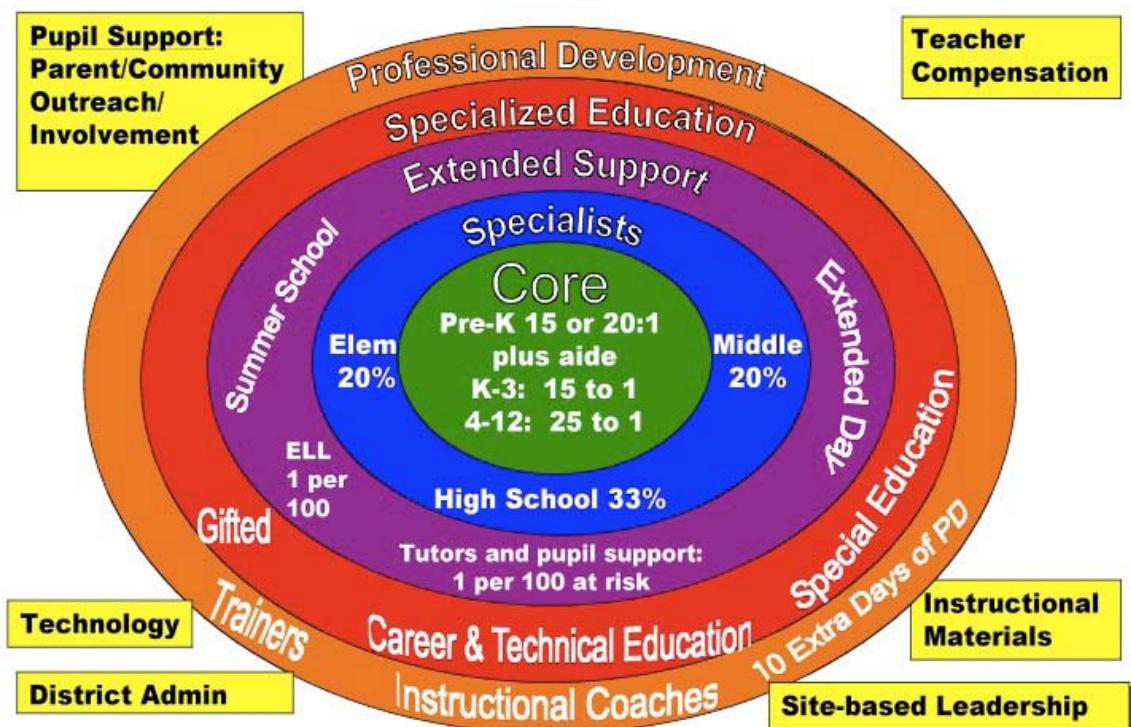


Figure 1: The Evidence Based Model

The Cost Model

We further disaggregate 3- and 4-year-old children based on family income, estimating the total number of 3- and 4-year-olds, the number in families with incomes at the poverty level, and the number in families with incomes at 200% of the poverty level. Finally, the model enables us to continuously vary the estimated percentage of eligible 3- and 4-year-olds who actually participate in pre-k programs.

In addition to allowing for the variation in the number of 3- and 4-year-olds, the model allows us to vary all of the components of the evidence-based model. The largest component of the model is for personnel. In the cost estimates provided today, we have used NEA estimates of teacher salaries by state. For other personnel, we have relied on national average salaries adjusted by region for geographical cost differences.

The power of this model is that it allows individuals in each state to estimate the costs of pre-k to 3rd programs using a variety of assumptions about program components, eligibility, and participation rates for pre-k children, as well as salaries for school personnel.

Estimated Costs of an Integrated Pre-K to 3rd Program

The estimated costs of an integrated pre-k to 3rd grade program vary depending on the assumptions made regarding eligibility of 3- and 4-year-old children for pre-k programs and on the assumptions made regarding their participation rate. It also varies with the size of pre-k classes. Tables 1 and 2 display the variation in the estimated total costs and total costs per-pupil of an integrated pre-k to 3rd program. These are displayed using a variety of assumptions regarding eligibility for 3- and 4-year-old children and alternative assumptions regarding the size of pre-k classes. For example, if we assumed universal eligibility for 3- and 4-year-old children, with a participation rate of 65% and pre-k class size of 20 students with a teacher and aide, the estimated total pre-k to 3rd costs are \$215 billion or \$10,867 per pre-k to 3rd student. It is important to note that these are total costs for pre-k to 3rd programs and reflect not only quality pre-k program costs, but the costs of a quality K-3 program as estimated using the evidence-based model—costs which in many states exceed current K-3 spending.

Tables 3 and 4 show how much additional revenue would be needed to fund these programs. Assuming the components of the evidence-based adequacy model were implemented for pre-k to 3rd grade programs in every state, and that parents of 65% of the eligible children elect to place their children in pre-k programs, we estimate that the likely additional national costs of providing adequate pre-k to 3rd programs range from \$29.8 billion to \$78.7 billion depending on the number of 3- and 4-year-old children who are eligible for the program and the average size of pre-k classes.⁶⁹ On a per-child-served basis this ranges from \$2,237 to \$3,975.

⁶⁹ These figures assume that any state that funds Pre-K through 3rd-grade programs above the adequate level estimated using the Evidence-Based approach continue to expend those resources for education. That is, these figures “hold harmless” these states where education expenditures exceed our estimates and therefore represent the national cost to bring every state to at least an adequate level. In addition, these numbers assume a maximum of 65% participation in Pre-K programs.

Table 1: Estimated Total Costs of Providing Pre-K to 3rd Programs Using the Evidence-Based Model in 2005-06 in States with Spending Currently Below Evidence-Based Adequacy Estimates (Billions of Dollars):
Using Pre-K Class Sizes of 15 and 20

	Number of 3- and 4-Year-Olds					
	100% of federal poverty level		200% of federal poverty level		All Children	
	Average PreK class size (teacher and instructional aide)					
Participation Rates	15	20	15	20	15	20
50% participation	\$169.30	\$168.20	\$180.60	\$178.20	\$207.60	\$202.10
65% participation	\$172.40	\$171.00	\$187.10	\$184.00	\$222.20	\$215.00
100% participation	\$179.80	\$177.50	\$202.20	\$197.50	\$256.20	\$245.20

Table 2: Estimated Per-Child Total Costs of Providing Pre-K to 3rd Programs Using the Evidence-Based Model in States with Spending Currently Below Evidence-Based Adequacy Estimates (Dollars):
Using Pre-K Class Sizes of 15 and 20

	Number of 3- and 4-Year-Olds					
	100% of federal poverty level		200% of federal poverty level		All Children	
	Average PreK class size (teacher and instructional aide)					
Participation Rates	15	20	15	20	15	20
50% participation	\$11,029	\$10,954	\$11,097	\$10,951	\$11,181	\$10,884
65% participation	\$10,794	\$10,953	\$11,132	\$10,948	\$11,230	\$10,867
100% participation	\$11,091	\$10,950	\$11,207	\$10,944	\$11,323	\$10,836

Table 3: Estimated Additional Costs of Providing Pre-K to 3rd Programs Using the Evidence Based Model in 2005-06 in States with Spending Currently Below Evidence-Based Adequacy Estimates

(Billions of Dollars): Using Pre-K Class Sizes of 15 and 20

	Number of 3- and 4-Year-Olds					
	100% of federal poverty level		200% of federal poverty level		All Children	
	Average PreK Class Size (teacher and instructional aide)					
Participation Rates	15	20	15	20	15	20
50% participation	\$28.40	\$27.40	\$38.20	\$36.10	\$64.10	\$58.60
65% participation	\$31.00	\$29.80	\$44.00	\$41.20	\$78.70	\$71.50
100% participation	\$37.30	\$35.30	\$58.80	\$54.10	\$112.70	\$101.70

Table 4: Estimated Per-Child Additional Costs of Providing Pre-K to 3rd Programs Using the Evidence Based Model in States with Spending Currently Below Evidence-Based Adequacy Estimates (Dollars):
Using Pre-K Class Sizes of 15 and 20

	Number of 3- and 4-Year-Olds					
	100% of federal poverty level		200% of federal poverty level		All Children	
	Average PreK Class Size (teacher and instructional aide)					
Participation Rates	15	20	15	20	15	20
50% participation	\$2,169	\$2,095	\$2,692	\$2,545	\$3,471	\$3,179
65% participation	\$2,332	\$2,237	\$2,763	\$2,790	\$3,975	\$3,626
100% participation	\$2,623	\$2,500	\$3,281	\$3,099	\$4,981	\$4,494



Table 5 displays our estimate of the costs of a high-quality integrated pre-k to 3rd grade program in all 50 states assuming an average pre-k class size of 20 (with both a teacher and an instructional aide) and an average class size of 15 for K-3 programs, along with universal access for all 3- and 4-year-olds, and a participation rate of 65%.

It is helpful to look more closely at the estimated costs of integrated, high quality pre-k to 3rd grade programs in a sample of states. If we assume all 3- and 4-year-old children are eligible for pre-k programs; that 65% of those children actually enroll in pre-k programs; and that the average class size is 20 students with a teacher and an aide, then in Arizona, for instance, an integrated pre-k to 3rd program would cost \$4.5 billion, or \$2.5 billion more than is currently spent on pre-k to 3rd grade education in that state. This amounts to an average of \$10,042 per student and represents an increase of \$5,582 per pupil.

Under those same assumptions regarding class size, eligibility and participation rate, the total cost in Illinois for quality pre-k to 3rd grade programs would be \$10.1 billion, or \$12,110 per pupil. This represents an increase of \$3.9 billion over current pre-k to 3rd spending, or an increase of \$4,613 per pre-k to 3rd student.

New Mexico would need a total of \$1.3 billion dollars, or an increase of \$428 million. This amounts to a total of \$10,065 and an increase of \$2,945 per pre-k to 3rd grade pupil served.

Texas would need to spend \$18.8 billion to provide the evidence-based pre-k to 3rd grade program, or approximately \$7.2 billion more than it currently spends for these programs. Total estimated spending per pre-k to 3rd pupil served is \$10,025, which is a \$3,834 per pre-k to 3rd pupil.

These individual state estimates will vary depending on the assumptions made regarding the number of 3- and 4-year-olds that are eligible for public pre-k programs, the percent who participate and the estimated size of pre-k classes.

An important component of pre-k to 3rd is integration between the pre-k and K-3 programs. It is important that teachers at both levels have time to understand the curriculum across all levels and have adequate time for planning and coordination to ensure a well-articulated curriculum. To understand the staffing and fiscal resource requirements of this pre-k to 3rd integration, we visited six programs identified by the Foundation for Child Development. Based on our observations and on interviews with school teachers and administrators, we concluded that the range of personnel funded through the evidence-based model is adequate to provide sufficient resources for strong integration across grades pre-k to 3rd.

Conclusions

This study estimates the costs of providing a high quality pre-k to 3rd grade education program in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia. Relying on an evidence-based approach to school finance adequacy, it identifies the staffing resources needed to offer high-quality integrated pre-k to 3rd programs and then estimates the costs of those resources.

By developing a highly flexible model, it is possible to simulate alternative staffing resource configurations for pre-k to 3rd programs providing a state-by-state estimate of the cost to implement the program.

If we assume that 65% of 3- and 4-year-old children will participate in pre-k programs, we estimate the additional cost of providing the resources for pre-k to 3rd ranges from \$31 billion if eligibility is limited to 3- and 4-year-olds at 100% of the federal poverty level to \$78.7 billion if pre-k is universally available to 3- and 4-year-olds. These costs range from \$2,169 to \$4,494 per student served, and vary considerably by state.

Table 5 Estimated Costs of an Integrated Pre-K to 3rd Program By State: 2005-06

(Pre-K Class Size of 20, K-3 Class Size of 15, All 3- and 4-Year-Olds Eligible, 65% Participation in Pre-K)

State	PreK-3rd Cost Cost Estimate	PreK-3rd Cost Estimate Per Pupil	Estimate of PreK-3rd Current Expenditures	K-3rd Expenditures Per Pupil	Difference	Difference Per-Pupil
Alabama	\$ 2,979,894,704	\$ 9,611	\$ 1,923,963,356	\$ 6,205	\$ 1,055,931,349	\$ 3,406
Alaska	\$ 594,381,240	\$ 11,729	\$ 415,453,133	\$ 8,198	\$ 178,928,107	\$ 3,531
Arizona	\$ 4,468,226,074	\$ 10,042	\$ 1,984,386,840	\$ 4,460	\$ 2,483,839,234	\$ 5,582
Arkansas	\$ 1,891,004,149	\$ 9,763	\$ 1,388,076,923	\$ 7,166	\$ 502,927,226	\$ 2,596
California	\$ 31,850,591,952	\$ 12,355	\$ 17,336,706,375	\$ 6,725	\$ 14,513,885,576	\$ 5,630
Colorado	\$ 3,179,243,403	\$ 9,806	\$ 2,236,083,814	\$ 6,897	\$ 943,159,590	\$ 2,909
Connecticut	\$ 2,800,222,697	\$ 12,356	\$ 2,283,009,822	\$ 10,074	\$ 517,212,875	\$ 2,282
Delaware	\$ 617,484,651	\$ 11,997	\$ 474,002,928	\$ 9,209	\$ 143,481,723	\$ 2,788
District of Columbia	\$ 440,899,831	\$ 14,423	\$ 390,419,340	\$ 12,771	\$ 50,480,491	\$ 1,651
Florida	\$ 11,080,664,407	\$ 10,006	\$ 7,045,975,633	\$ 6,362	\$ 4,034,688,774	\$ 3,643
Georgia	\$ 7,180,071,952	\$ 10,678	\$ 4,699,172,493	\$ 6,988	\$ 2,480,899,459	\$ 3,690
Hawaii	\$ 860,362,225	\$ 10,451	\$ 584,416,554	\$ 7,099	\$ 275,945,671	\$ 3,352
Idaho	\$ 1,010,349,393	\$ 9,134	\$ 600,439,457	\$ 5,428	\$ 409,909,936	\$ 3,706
Illinois	\$ 10,145,651,410	\$ 12,110	\$ 6,280,879,594	\$ 7,497	\$ 3,864,771,816	\$ 4,613
Indiana	\$ 4,545,325,529	\$ 10,638	\$ 2,924,860,476	\$ 6,846	\$ 1,620,465,053	\$ 3,793
Iowa	\$ 1,740,368,211	\$ 9,218	\$ 1,188,524,774	\$ 6,295	\$ 551,843,437	\$ 2,923
Kansas	\$ 1,790,617,088	\$ 9,614	\$ 1,252,259,938	\$ 6,723	\$ 538,357,150	\$ 2,890
Kentucky	\$ 2,698,769,520	\$ 9,891	\$ 1,845,776,125	\$ 6,765	\$ 852,993,395	\$ 3,126
Louisiana	\$ 2,846,067,176	\$ 9,848	\$ 2,012,595,113	\$ 6,964	\$ 833,472,064	\$ 2,884
Maine	\$ 674,354,153	\$ 9,681	\$ 682,037,695	\$ 9,792	\$ (7,683,542)	\$ (110)
Maryland	\$ 3,840,617,659	\$ 11,496	\$ 2,591,716,107	\$ 7,757	\$ 1,248,901,552	\$ 3,738
Massachusetts	\$ 4,633,155,337	\$ 11,957	\$ 3,816,456,990	\$ 9,849	\$ 816,698,347	\$ 2,108
Michigan	\$ 7,759,965,769	\$ 11,572	\$ 5,369,134,655	\$ 8,007	\$ 2,390,831,113	\$ 3,565
Minnesota	\$ 3,382,479,850	\$ 10,513	\$ 2,476,249,701	\$ 7,697	\$ 906,230,149	\$ 2,817
Mississippi	\$ 2,103,146,325	\$ 9,716	\$ 1,295,295,380	\$ 5,984	\$ 807,850,944	\$ 3,732
Missouri	\$ 3,542,005,805	\$ 9,574	\$ 2,281,809,614	\$ 6,168	\$ 1,260,196,191	\$ 3,406
Montana	\$ 506,508,571	\$ 9,157	\$ 371,477,465	\$ 6,716	\$ 135,031,106	\$ 2,441
Nebraska	\$ 1,054,612,654	\$ 9,266	\$ 720,038,193	\$ 6,326	\$ 334,574,461	\$ 2,940
Nevada	\$ 1,689,504,931	\$ 9,925	\$ 913,591,211	\$ 5,367	\$ 775,913,720	\$ 4,558
New Hampshire	\$ 711,586,239	\$ 9,771	\$ 577,258,766	\$ 7,926	\$ 134,327,473	\$ 1,844
New Jersey	\$ 7,067,947,347	\$ 12,966	\$ 6,095,448,780	\$ 11,182	\$ 972,498,568	\$ 1,784
New Mexico	\$ 1,331,102,897	\$ 10,065	\$ 941,646,903	\$ 7,120	\$ 389,455,994	\$ 2,945
New York	\$ 14,131,711,947	\$ 12,807	\$ 11,917,953,306	\$ 10,801	\$ 2,213,758,641	\$ 2,006
North Carolina	\$ 5,979,309,408	\$ 9,821	\$ 3,649,499,666	\$ 5,994	\$ 2,329,809,742	\$ 3,827
North Dakota	\$ 313,968,777	\$ 8,797	\$ 236,147,544	\$ 6,616	\$ 77,821,233	\$ 2,180
Ohio	\$ 7,976,148,070	\$ 10,825	\$ 5,649,112,737	\$ 7,667	\$ 2,327,035,333	\$ 3,158
Oklahoma	\$ 2,401,624,651	\$ 9,407	\$ 1,641,937,569	\$ 6,431	\$ 759,687,082	\$ 2,975
Oregon	\$ 2,366,855,891	\$ 10,644	\$ 1,570,678,854	\$ 7,063	\$ 796,177,037	\$ 3,580
Pennsylvania	\$ 8,019,397,369	\$ 11,504	\$ 6,000,052,342	\$ 8,607	\$ 2,019,345,027	\$ 2,897
Rhode Island	\$ 672,086,432	\$ 11,585	\$ 503,647,876	\$ 8,681	\$ 168,438,556	\$ 2,903
South Carolina	\$ 2,796,562,749	\$ 9,889	\$ 1,902,521,954	\$ 6,728	\$ 894,040,795	\$ 3,161
South Dakota	\$ 415,532,117	\$ 8,405	\$ 312,228,390	\$ 6,315	\$ 103,303,727	\$ 2,089
Tennessee	\$ 3,867,030,948	\$ 9,712	\$ 2,207,878,476	\$ 5,545	\$ 1,659,152,472	\$ 4,167
Texas	\$ 18,800,277,588	\$ 10,025	\$ 11,611,114,194	\$ 6,191	\$ 7,189,163,394	\$ 3,834
Utah	\$ 2,016,344,085	\$ 8,886	\$ 940,924,225	\$ 4,146	\$ 1,075,419,860	\$ 4,739
Vermont	\$ 353,027,452	\$ 10,060	\$ 352,334,956	\$ 10,040	\$ 692,496	\$ 20
Virginia	\$ 5,048,902,620	\$ 10,282	\$ 3,553,507,372	\$ 7,236	\$ 1,495,395,249	\$ 3,045
Washington	\$ 4,105,746,272	\$ 10,251	\$ 2,566,186,640	\$ 6,407	\$ 1,539,559,632	\$ 3,844
West Virginia	\$ 1,049,189,454	\$ 9,976	\$ 932,663,076	\$ 8,868	\$ 116,526,378	\$ 1,108
Wisconsin	\$ 3,363,076,187	\$ 10,319	\$ 2,671,830,955	\$ 8,198	\$ 691,245,232	\$ 2,121
Wyoming	\$ 328,445,224	\$ 9,870	\$ 314,823,162	\$ 9,460	\$ 13,622,062	\$ 409
Totals*	\$ 215,022,420,385	\$ 10,867	\$ 143,534,207,436	\$ 7,254	\$ 71,495,896,491	\$ 3,613

Selected Recommendations

With the importance of early education in closing the Latino achievement gap founded on evidence-based research, the next step is the implementation of high-quality pre-k through 3rd grade systems. Throughout the hearing, a number of recommendations arose pertaining to curricula, structural changes, professional training and development, community measures, funding, and policy implementation.

As elected and appointed officials consider strategies, especially those with jurisdiction over Local Education Agencies, keep in mind that Congress has acted on a number of measures to improve pre-k education, as testimony from Dr. Libby Doggett reports. These include raising education standards for Head Start program teachers to the bachelor degree level; requiring states to appoint advisory councils to oversee early childhood systems development; and inclusion of pre-k, Head Start, and child care teachers in special student-loan relief programs. Dr. Doggett also pointed to proposed legislation by Representative Mazie Hirono (D-HI) to create a federal grant to improve pre-k quality in states.

In addition to Congress, the value of early childhood education was a core theme in candidate Barack Obama's education plan. Sworn in as the 44th President of the United States in January 2009, President Obama included major new investments in early education in his proposed fiscal year 2010 budget request for the Department of Education.

Key proposals in the 2010 budget include the following:

- \$500 million for a new program of Title I Early Childhood Grants, which would encourage LEAs to use Title I Recovery Act funds to start or expand Title I preschool programs.
- \$300 million for a new Early Learning Challenge Fund, a central component of the President's Zero-to-Five initiative, to help States develop or refine systems for rating and improving the quality of early learning programs.

More information: www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget10/summary/10summary.pdf

Additional Proposed Funding Strategies

In a discussion session following the hearing, Latino state legislators shared the following additional ideas on finding funding for high-quality early childhood education:

- An accurate overall picture is needed.
- Not knowing how many programs are functioning or their costs, especially in looking at local versus state programs, makes it difficult to establish alignment and detect redundancies. States that “start from zero” have an easier time in designing a system without duplication.
- Survey the early education landscape.
- With so many small providers and varied types of delivery, districts and states face challenges in alignment.
- Explore public/private models.
- Solutions may use public school resources (curricula, teachers, facilities) but private funding. Another solution is to have a private “academy” within the public school.
- Consider enterprise development zones.
- Subsidized funding from these programs might be applied to establishment of child education centers in “fight blight” zones—such as turning an unused warehouse into a child care center.
- Targeted early education.
- Funding aimed to benefit homeless people, at-risk children, or people with disabilities can be channeled into early education programs that benefit these populations.
- Block grants.
- Use of these for funding offers more local control of early education options.

Other recommendations from those presenting at the Latino Legislative Hearing on Pre-K and the Early Grades included the following:

Public Investment

- Advocate for state leaders to continue to increase investments to improve the quality of state pre-k programs and expand access to all 3- and 4- year olds.
- Prioritize funding to programs serving our most at-risk preschoolers, including children coming from homes where English is not spoken.

- In states and districts, analyze advantages and drawbacks of funding sources including general revenue, lottery revenue or dedicated percentage of income tax.
- Use evidence-based standards of high-quality education when determining costs of early education programs.
- Advocate for full funding for Head Start and the Child Care and Development Fund by Congress.
- Congress can reserve funding for a pre-k incentive grant in the fiscal 2010 budget as a funding vehicle for states to improve the quality of pre-k.
- Advocate full funding of the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, to ensure children with disabilities have access and are able to reap full benefits of early childhood education.

Teacher and Administrative Professional Development

- Continue to expand public support for the TEACH program, which provides funding for child care professionals to attend classes at a participating college or university and earn credits toward a Child Development Associate credential (CDA) or an associate or bachelor's degree in early childhood education.
- Promote articulation agreements between two- and four-year institutions, so that those studying early childhood education can easily move credits from community colleges to obtain bachelor's degrees, without having to repeat classes and waste public money.
- Invest in specialized training of principals and administrators of early education programs, to provide leadership.
- Require early childhood education certification for classroom teachers.
- Expand teacher licensure requirements to include training in another language.

Curriculum and System Structure

- Explore ways to institute dual language programs for all early learners given the benefit indicated by research.
- Ensure pre-k to 3rd grade education is high quality. Require that it reflect standards and best practices developed and proven to get results.
- Eliminate any existing English-language requirements for pre-k attendance and base admittance on psychometrically sound assessments of school readiness.
- Establish a state early childhood education council to assess and analyze the future direction of pre-k to 3rd education.

- Think holistically about early childhood education and expand plans and concepts for learning to begin at birth. Build this learning continuum with concrete building blocks such as pre-k.
- Ensure curriculum is research-based and aligned with school system standards.
- Have on each school staff at least one teacher-coach who is a specialist in bilingual or English as a Second Language education to provide professional development to other teachers and coaches in effective services for dual language learners.
- Break down the “silo effect” of having child care, pre-k, and elementary schools operate under different state departments with discrepant standards, regulations, and oversight.
- Federal, state, and local accountability systems can utilize the most current and sophisticated methods to take into account the full array of English Language Learner children’s developmental skills and abilities, within each language, as well as across languages.

Community and Parent Involvement

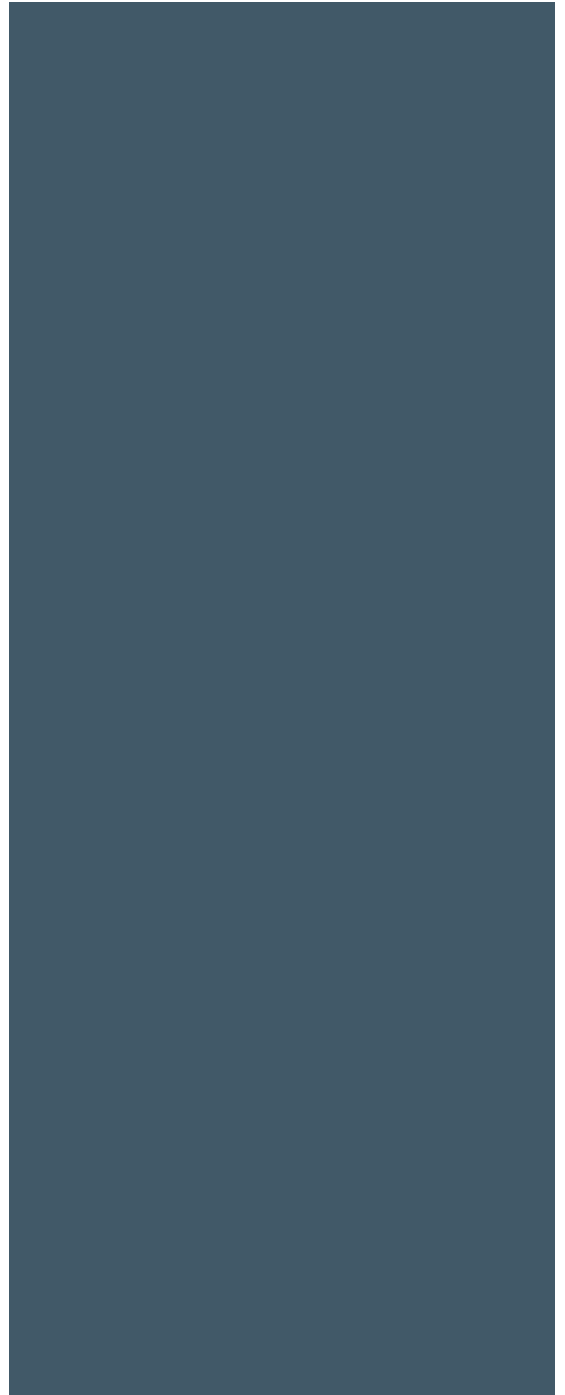
- Expand parent and community access to all early education programs.
- Improve parent and community outreach by using diverse outreach methods. Ensure language differences are addressed and information is accessible.
- Perform community outreach in the search for bilingual teachers and potential teachers. Actively recruit from the community and provide access to training and development for potential teachers from the community.
- Educate school system stakeholders to understand that supporting rich, diverse language experiences in children’s home languages and in any language contributes to language-learning ability and future academic success.
- Support collaboration among district officials, churches, child care, Head Start and Latino community-based organizations to develop early childhood and infant/toddler programs.
- Create community early childhood education advisory groups.
- Require programs to develop a community collaboration and parent involvement plan.





The NALEO Educational Fund is the nation's leading non-partisan, non-profit organization that facilitates full Latino participation in the American political process from citizenship to public service. Since 1990, the NALEO Educational Fund has provided governance training programs to thousands of Latino public officials from throughout the country. NALEO members actively participate in relevant and timely professional development opportunities that prepare them to be America's best public servants. The Fund's training programs equip Latino elected and appointed officials with leadership strategies and governance tools to effectively address our nation's numerous policy challenges.

For more information, please contact the NALEO Educational Fund Constituency Services Department
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